A VOICE FROM THE CONGO

A VOICE FROM THE CONGO

COMPRISING STORIES, ANECDOTES, AND DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

BY

HERBERT WARD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS, SCULPTURE, AND DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

"Savages are but shades of ourselves"
Ovid

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To
MY WIFE

PREFACE

It was no high motive that took me to Africa. I went there simply and solely to gratify my love of adventure. At the age of fifteen I commenced my travels, and during the course of my wanderings in New Zealand, Australia, and in unknown regions of northern Borneo, I experienced many ups and downs. These vicissitudes only whetted my appetite, and led me to Central Africa, where I passed the five most impressionable years of my life.

I took to Africans from the first. I was young, full of life and high spirits, and regarded every one I met as a friend. My confidence was sometimes checked, but never shaken. With youthful exuberance of spirits I fraternised with every one I met, and I soon found there was a fund of good-humour in the African composition. There was a good side to even the most villainous-looking savage, and I generally found it.

In this free and easy way I entered into the lives of the natives. My sympathy, which was with them at the commencement, ripened with time. They ap-

pealed strongly to me by reason of their simplicity and directness, their lack of scheming or plotting, and by the spontaneity of everything they did. Hence my efforts to learn their language, in order that I might know them better.

Commencing in this casual manner I found myself gradually drawn into serious reflections, and I became imbued with a profound sympathy for African human nature.

H. W.

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A VOICE FROM THE CONGO

VILLAGE SCENES

Ibenza is the name of the village. It is situated in the heart of the great African forest, fifteen hundred miles from ocean shores. The population is small, for the native communities of this wild region are wanting in the elements of union. The women outnumber the men to the extent of fully three to one; the men being killed fighting, whereas the women are less exposed to danger, by reason of their marketable value. To study the doings of a single day in this village may serve to give an insight into the general conditions of native life.

It is early morning—dark, damp and cold. A white mist hangs heavily over the ground, enveloping the huts and all the lower growths of foliage in ghostly mystery. The air is laden with the sickly pungent odour of decaying vegetation. There are sounds, often mournful in character, befitting the music of the wild forest. The incessant singing of mosquitoes is maddening to the ear. The hoarse croaking of frogs and the strange and varied utterances of animal life impress one as sounding strangely weird and discordant in the gloom.

In the long line of grass huts, where the natives are sleeping, one hears occasional sounds of heavy breathing; over yonder a woman with a crying baby in her arms, crouches over the dying embers of a fire.

The first ray of dawn is heralded by the plaintive wail of guinea-fowl, as they flap their wings and fly from their roosting-places in search of food.

Men and women crawl forth from their tiny grass huts, yawning and stretching themselves after their night's deep slumber. The morning mists soon disappear and the village gradually becomes animated. Children, light-hearted and joyous, commence to gambol in every direction; some with their mimic bows and arrows shoot at the prowling pariah dogs.

When the sun is well above the horizon, rising in a cloudless sky and shedding a genial warmth upon the earth, all Nature wears a joyful aspect. Numbers of chirping tiny birds, whose resplendent plumage glistens in the bright sunshine, suddenly appear from the dark gloomy forest and flit around the bushes in the village clearing. Large zephyr-winged butterflies and others all gorgeous and radiant with brilliant colour soar gracefully above the refuse-heaps. The village scene is in striking contrast to these fairy-like surroundings; for the grass conical-shaped huts are still sodden with heavy night dew, the narrow paths are littered with dead leaves and rubbish, and the native home accords

A Congo group

From a bronze group by the Author

well with the careless unrestrained nature of its inhabitants.

The morning meal, consisting of a few ears of maize and half-smoked fish, is soon over. Then follows the departure of nearly all the women; they vanish into their forest plantations in quest of food and firewood. The men gradually assemble together in front of the chief's hut to hear the public discussions of the day.

These palaver meetings are dear to all Central Africans. They take keen delight in oratory, which may in fact be said to constitute one of their important arts. They talk fluently and employ many metaphorical and flowery expressions. Possessing a natural gift of rude eloquence, it is greatly enhanced in effect by the soft inflections and the harmonious euphony of their language; they reason well and display great aptitude for debate.

The case before the court to-day relates to the death of a young slave girl. She was recently seized by a crocodile, while bathing in the river. About two hundred men and boys in semi-nakedness, seat themselves in a circle in front of their chief, a large-boned truculent-looking man, decorated with heavy iron anklets and bracelets, sitting cross-legged upon a leopard skin.

The former owner of the deceased slave steps forward; striking his spear blade downwards in the

ground in front of him, he produces in his right hand a number of small pieces of split bamboo. Speaking fluently and with simple gesture he caps each point of his oration by selecting one of his small sticks and placing it upon the ground in front of him. In brief, his speech relates first to his early life, and then in monotonous rotation, and with a careless indifference to relevancy, he enumerates all the most memorable and favourable events of his own life, down to the time when he purchased the deceased slave. He then relates the history of the unfortunate slave-girl's untimely end.

"Death is not a natural event," he continues, in the flowery idiom of his language. "Some person with an evil heart has been in communication with the crocodile that deprived me of my slave. An evil spirit, born of envy or malice, has entered the soul of some person in this village and has been communicated to the crocodile. It may even be that some revengeful man or woman has actually become transformed into the shape of a crocodile to do me harm. An evil spirit has been at work, and I call upon our Nganga, our wise and clever witch-doctor, to seek it."

His speech is ended, and upon the ground at his feet lie the row of small sticks which have served as memoranda.

No sooner has the first speech concluded than another orator commences, with a different line of

argument; suggesting that the slave girl had offended the great Evil Spirit, and that the angry "Ndoki" had sent his emissary the crocodile to punish her.

Other men, with yet more strangely superstitious views, hasten to gain the attention of the company; the discussion grows heated, and voices are suddenly raised in anger. An imminent brawl is however diverted by the timely appearance of several women upon the scene. They carry large earthenware jars of fermented sugar-cane juice. The hubbub ceases; the natives forgetful of their differences crowd forward and drink the intoxicating liquid and their voices assume a more friendly tone. The sun is now at its zenith and the heat is intense.

Suddenly all eyes are directed towards a forest path. A jingle of iron bells, a stamping of feet, and from a cloud of dust there springs the grotesque figure of the Fetish Man. Wild-cat skins dangle from his waist. His eyelids are whitened with chalk. His body is smeared with the blood of a fresh-killed fowl. His feather head-dress flutters as he dances. His charms and metal ornaments clank and jingle as he bounds and springs hither and thither somewhat after the manner of a harlequin.

Wildly he dances, stamping his feet and wriggling his body as though his waist was a hinge; the company, squatting round him in a circle, meanwhile chant a monotonous dirge-like song and clap their

hands in unison. At length, bathed in perspiration, dusty and bedraggled, the Fetish Man with a gesture of his hand commands silence. With high prancing steps and swaying shoulders he passes slowly around the company directing searching looks into many faces. In a falsetto voice, still swaying his body, he states that he has come to seek an evil spirit, that he seeks the person who is guilty of having taken the form of a crocodile to kill a woman.

"It is a woman," says he with a fiendish grin, changing the tone of his voice from shrill falsetto to deep bass, "a woman, an old woman, who was envious of the good favour shown to the dead girl by her master."

Stooping low, he places his ear to the ground, and carries on an imaginary conversation. He pretends to consult a spirit in the earth. Then rising, he walks with measured prancing steps in the direction of a poor forlorn-looking woman. Pointing towards her, he makes a hideous grimace and in a sepulchral tone of voice he condemns her as being the guilty person. The wretched woman shrieks, springs to her feet, and turns to flee. Too late. A spear instantly glistens in the air, it strikes her in the back, and with a moan of pain she falls heavily to the ground. During the ensuing uproar her body is dragged away towards the river amid deafening

yells and shouts. They then rejoice, these simple people, that an evil spirit has been appeased.

The noise gradually subsides, the village paths become deserted, it is the midday period of idleness and the natives sleep. All becomes silent and tranquil. Even the birds and insects seek a sheltered spot. The sun pours forth a fierce heat, with a glaring light, and the thatched roofs of the huts glisten as though covered with snow. When the shadows lengthen, life again awakens. The men rest their heads upon their wives' knees, to have their hair dressed. The women deftly comb and plait the crisp woolly hair into braids and points with the aid of a long iron skewer and red palm oil. As an instance in proof of decoration being antecedent to dress, these people, living in a state of almost complete nudity, spend no inconsiderable portion of their lives in hair-dressing and in anointing their bodies with oil and cam-wood powder.

As the sun sets, the women bring forth the evening meal of roasted plantains, boiled cassava root, half-smoked fish, with perhaps a bowl of roasted wood-worms, locusts, or white ants. The men eat at the doors of their huts; the women retire aside to eat, for etiquette in this distant land forbids women to eat in the presence of men.

When it is dark and the fireflies sparkle round the bushes, a big wooden drum booms forth a sum-

mons to the night dance. With gay shouts the people assemble together. Forming themselves into two rows they advance and recede with sinuous swaying movements, singing in full rich tones a rhythmical air, keeping time by clapping their hands and stamping their feet. Later on, the moon sheds a silvery light upon their metal ornaments and perspiring bodies. The deep bass voices of the men and the high-pitched tones of the women echo in the forest, their naked feet shuffle and stamp upon the ground. The graceful palm-leaves and broad banana-leaves with their fine lines and curves resemble trellis-work against the clear night sky. A transparent blue smoke from the wood fires is occasionally wafted across the scene on the evening breeze. The scene is weird, the sounds are barbaric, it is a picture of human life in an early stage.

By midnight the dance is ended and all becomes hushed. Gaunt pariah dogs sneak about the village paths in search of food. At length they too grow drowsy, and curl their bodies in the white ashes of the expired fires. Occasionally a baby whines and cries; frogs croak and myriads of mosquitoes once more fill the night air with their music.

SKETCHES OF NATIVE CHARACTER

The best illustration of the naïveté of the Congo character occurred to me at a place called Manyanga. It was during the hottest part of the day, and I was sitting on the veranda of my grass-thatched hut gazing upon the troubled waters of the cataract region thinking of the particularly tragic incident which ended the life of Frank Pocock, perhaps the most tragic circumstance connected with Stanley's memorable journey across Africa, in the year 1877. From where I sat, I could see the troubled waters swirling and foaming below the huge rocks against which the poor brave fellow had been dashed to death.

A party of natives returning from a market, wended their way towards me, and the spokesman by every persuasive power of speech endeavoured to sell me a skinny goat for treble its value. The interview ended abruptly, and a few minutes later I was watching the little party embarking in a canoe, paddling their way up stream, keeping close to the shore until they attained a point at which it was

customary, but at all times hazardous, to steer the frail round-bottomed dug-out across to the north bank, a distance of some five hundred yards, through violent and ever-changing whirlpools. About half a mile below this point the water churned itself into foam as it swept over a succession of enormous rocks, and represented an ever-present danger to those who crossed the river.

Listlessly at first, I watched the little party in their wobbling canoe until they had reached the critical part of their journey, the part at which they had to manœuvre their canoe so as to escape the vortex of a powerful whirlpool.

My apathy suddenly gave way to a feeling of keen apprehension, as I observed that they were being carried away, broadside on, in the swiftest part of the channel. The paddlers had evidently lost control, and the other members of the party appeared to be overcome by a sense of impending disaster, for they began to sway the canoe from side to side in their endeavours to aid the paddlers.

By the time I reached the river's bank all was lost, for the canoe had sunk, and in its place were now merely a few black specks bobbing here and there, with occasionally an arm thrown up in wild despair.

In a few minutes all was ended, and the poor fellows who had not been drowned at once were swept to perdition by the terrific force of the stream.

A Bakongo woman
Drawn by the Author

To my amazement, I perceived one individual who still kept afloat and who swam bravely back towards the south bank. Walking along the river side I kept pace with him as he swam, and the tension of watching the poor man's efforts became acute. At the time, it seemed miraculous that he should have power enough to reach the shore, but he did. My surprise can be imagined when I found that a child, a chubby little boy of four or five years of age, was still clinging around the man's neck.

Overcome by excitement and by admiration for the man's prowess, I aided him to land, and took the two survivors to my hut, where I collected everything I could lay my hands upon, likely to be considered valuable in the eyes of a native. At the same time as I presented the man with these modest gifts, I told him that he had that day performed a deed which would greatly please white men. I told him that he was a plucky fellow for having saved a helpless child from imminent death. He replied:

"Yes, he is saved. I tried many times to shake him off, but he clung too tight!"

* * * * *

Tony of Kabinda was the servant of a missionary. It was a generally accepted fact that Tony had a past. However, as mission interpreter he behaved himself with pious dignity, and became quite a power in the mission region.

When hunting elephants in company with several head-men of a neighbouring village, Tony was anxious to have the game to himself, and shouted to the group of men in front of him, saying:

"Get out of the way—get behind me. Let those who fear God shoot!"

* * * * *

I once shot an old bull elephant in the forest near Ibenza. The occasion was one of joy to the natives. Within a few hours the mighty animal was reduced to a skeleton, and the village reeked of flesh. Satiated with meat, the natives gathered round my tent and asked to view the gun with which I had slain the elephant. The chief in particular was an interested auditor of my explanations and descriptions. In the midst of the interview, I was interrupted by one of my followers, the Zanzibari cook, who approached me, whining in Kiswahili, a language unknown to the natives:

"Ekh Bwana! Naona tabu sana Bwana." ("I am seeing much trouble, my master; I am ill in my body.")

Producing a bottle of pills from a small medicine-case, I administered one, as being a sufficiently powerful dose for any normal constitution. The Ibenza chief thereupon held out his hand, saying:

"Maa, na kulinga." ("Give to me also from that bottle, O white man.")

Being practically at the mercy of the natives, as I was travelling with but few followers, I deemed it

wise to humour the chief in such a small request and I presented him with a pill.

"White man! See! You have given me but one," said he, with an air of dissatisfaction, rolling the pill in the palm of his hand. "Unto him who is your slave you have given one. Would you treat a chief as you treat your slave?"

For a moment I was taken by surprise. Then rising to the occasion I expressed regret for having appeared to slight his dignity, and to meet the exigencies of the situation I handed him three more pills. With a gratified smile the chief held forth the four small silver-coated pills in his massive hand in order that the assembled company should observe the manner in which I had recognised his distinction of rank, and calmly rolling them into his mouth, he deliberately munched and swallowed them with every appearance of pleasure.

The following morning, at an early hour, I left the village, and started again upon my journey. Crowds of natives gathered around to bid me farewell, but in all the throng I failed to observe my friend the Ibenza chief.

* * * * *

One day, whilst strolling in this same far-away village, my attention was attracted by the piteous moaning of a woman. I found her lying upon a heap of refuse, banana peelings, sweepings, fish-

bones and rubbish, all seething in the hot sun. The poor creature appeared to be in great distress. Her body was smeared with blood and filth, and the flesh was literally torn from either side of her face, leaving her temples bare and raw.

In her agony she had clawed and torn her flesh with her finger-nails. Her despair was indeed pitiful to behold and I sought to soothe her, but all in vain.

Turning to a native who was standing by, I inquired in the native language:

"What ails this woman? What manner of malady is this? Quickly, tell me words to explain this."

The savage shrugged his shoulders, and, with a scornful toss of his head, he replied:

"That woman's baby died a few days ago. See! She bleeds herself with grief. That is all!"

Grief! The pathos of the scene would have moved a heart of stone. There at my feet was a revelation of savage feeling, of love and grief, of the deep emotions that can be enjoyed and suffered by one even of a cruel, cannibal race. As a mother, this woman had cherished and loved her child; as a savage, ignorant of faith and forlorn she mourned her infant's death.

* * * * *

It was evening, and we had travelled many miles that day in the fierce heat of the tropical sun. My carriers who were seated grouped around a cheerful log fire were recounting their different deeds of

A Congo boy

From the bronze by the Author

A study

From the bronze statuette by the Author

valour. Said one: "I am the greatest buffalo-hunter in all Ngembi." Another man related the many valiant deeds which he had performed in war. Another told of how he had faced an infuriated elephant, and killed it with a charge of stones fired from his old flint-lock gun.

Suddenly the wood crackled, shedding a shower of sparks, and the alacrity with which these bold-hearted hunters took flight was remarkable.

* * * * *

Although the sense of gratitude, in our ordinarily accepted meaning of the term, is rarely met with among Central Africans, it must not be thought that this virtue is foreign to their nature. As an illustration however of the absence of a sense of gratitude, I must cite an instance of a man who suffered from a form of skin disease. By dint of simple remedies I succeeded in purifying the man's blood, and, in fact, the patient proved so amenable to my treatment that at the end of a month I told him that he was perfectly cured and might go home.

"Yes, O white man," he replied, "but what will you pay me? I have been with you many days, a whole moon has passed, what will you pay me for all that time?"

* * * * *

With reference to the native's disregard for human life, it must be remembered that the motive

does not always proceed from mere malignity of nature. Sometimes it is due to superstition, sometimes to fear. The people are frequently over-ready to attack through dread of being attacked. They kill lest they should be killed. It is very true that a slight motive is often enough for taking human life: but that does not prevent them—even the worst cannibal tribes—from having a disposition that is in some respects amiable, and very easily conciliated and amused.

A man once fell from the scaffolding whilst engaged in cutting a tree. Spontaneously his friends all howled derisively at his misfortune. To a casual observer this incident might be noted down as yet another evidence of the callousness of their nature. More intimate association with the conditions of native life leads one to regard this incident from a different point of view.

His friends laughed, not because they were amused at his misfortune, but because they were glad that the accident had not happened to themselves. This slight incident may serve to indicate the difficulties one has to contend with in attempting to record facts and to form opinions relating to the working of the African mind.

* * * * *

It was in a market-place, and the inhabitants of all the country-side were there, buying, selling, haggling;

each individual talking incessantly, and quite indifferent as to whether any one listened.

Presently I detected the sound of angry voices. Said the Chief of Fumba to the Chief of Lutete:

"How poor are your people! A chief of people so poor is scarcely a chief at all. Do you not suffer from hunger? Are you not cold at night, because you have no cloth? And your dead, is it not hard to place them in the ground without any cloth around their bodies? Your children, too—why, our slaves at Fumba own more wealth than you people of Lutete."

In the course of a heated reply, I heard the Chief of Lutete allude to the forthcoming market of Nkandu. Said he:

"Your words are the words of envy. At the Nkandu market we will show you that you lie, that your words are not true words. Wait! O chief! Wait for the next market day."

This little dispute interested me, and I made a point of attending the next market. Everything went on as usual until noon. Suddenly I heard exclamations of astonishment and wonder. Hands were placed over open mouths in token of surprise, as the people gazed upon a long procession which slowly wended its way up the hill. These were the people of Lutete and they had come to answer the taunts of the Chief of Fumba by a parade of their wealth and possessions.

There were probably two hundred men and women,

and the chief who led them in person was most gorgeously attired. He carried a scarlet parasol encircled with gold lace. Upon his head he wore an English Lifeguardsman's helmet; around his neck he had the wooden circlet of a tambourine with its little brass cymbals jingling, and he wore next to his naked body the scarlet tunic of a militia uniform, which, together with some yards of multi-coloured cotton cloth wrapped round his waist, with the ends trailing in the dusty ground behind him, completed his dress. The costumes of his followers were no less amazing in their incongruity, and the whole formed a collection of so varied a nature as would have aroused the interest of a Houndsditch clothier. The parasols of all shades and descriptions; the yards of cloth and cotton goods; the rows upon rows of glass beads which adorned the bodies of the women; the jingling of the bells; the brave show of old flintlock guns; the queer uses to which some of the garments had been put: all made a picture not easily to be forgotten.

Without a word being said, the procession entered the market-place, and in a most dignified manner marched through the throng of admiring and dumfounded spectators, only to retire in the same order as they had come, still without uttering a word, whilst we all stood gazing in astonishment and silence as they followed the narrow serpentine path which led them back to their village in the valley below.

Group at Mobunga

Photograph taken by the Author

AN ELEPHANT HUNT

ELEPHANT-HUNTING alone and on foot, in spite of numerous obstacles in the shape of dense vegetation and boggy ground, with the physical strain of tramping, climbing, and wading, is an exciting sport.

Whilst living at Bangala, on the north bank of the Upper Congo River, one thousand miles in the interior of Central Africa, I heard many native accounts of the number of elephants to be found in the forests of the district of Mobunga, on the opposite shore of the river.

Upon an appointed day, accompanied by twenty-five Bangala natives as paddlers, I embarked in a large native war-canoe bound for Mobunga. Before us, at the close of a long day's paddling—for the Upper Congo River at this point is some twenty miles in width, from one main bank to the other—lay the low forest bank of the south shore. The village was soon located by the tiny columns of blue smoke which wreathed the upper branches of the giant cotton-trees.

This country had never before been visited by a white man, and we were far from being confident of a friendly reception from the cannibals. Our misgivings were quickly confirmed, for no sooner had the canoe approached within full view of the village than we were saluted with wild yells and howls. An ugly mob of armed natives rushed to the river side and manned several war-canoes, whilst others lined the river-bank with their spears poised at us.

In view of this reception, our prospects of elephant-hunting seemed remote; and my Bangala companions, well versed in savage ways, counselled a hasty retreat. At the critical moment, however, when escape seemed hopeless, owing to a number of large canoes heading us off, the chief suddenly made his appearance upon the bank. Raising his voice high above the uproar, he shouted:

"Benu bokuling undi?" (What do you want?)
"Itumba, ekh?" (Do you come to fight?)

Explanations followed, and the crowd gazed at us suspiciously.

"We come as friends," said the headman of my Bangala companions, speaking in the Mobunga dialect. "We come to visit your country because they tell us that there are many elephants. If you will believe that we are friends coming in peace and allow us to land, our white man will show you the strange weapon he has brought, which will kill

Study of dead elephant
By the Author

elephants. We have ourselves seen the power of the weapon, and it is strong. Let the white man come among you and kill elephants, you will have the meat for food. Think, O people of Mobunga! think of your stomachs all large with good elephant meat."

This tactful speech told greatly in our favour. The mere mention of the word "meat" had in fact an immediate effect, and the loud voices of distrust soon changed their tone into a low, rumbling note of eagerness.

Upon landing, we were at once surrounded by a surging crowd of evil-smelling ruffians, to the exclusion of all fresh air. I paid a heavy penalty indeed for the unique position of being their first white visitor; I was buffeted to and fro, whilst large grimy hands mauled me over as if to prove, by sense of touch, the reality of my strange appearance. My patience was sorely exercised, and the climax of my misery was reached when, after bland and eloquent speeches on the part of the chief and his henchmen, I submitted to the ceremony of blood-brotherhood with Ozoio, the Mobunga chief.

An incision was made in both our right arms, and our blood was collected and mixed in a broad leaf. This leaf was subsequently rolled after the manner of a cigar, cut into two portions and handed to us to eat. This trying ceremony, the traditional evidence of good faith, was accomplished by an ac-

companiment of shouts and by a furious uproar of drum-beating. We were then publicly proclaimed to be brothers of one blood.

It was now dark, and being anxious to avoid any further ordeal, I persuaded the chief to give me six of his best men to guide me into that portion of the forest where I should be most likely to find elephants. Much time was spent in haggling, and it was probably about ten o'clock at night before we eventually arrived at an understanding.

Setting out with my rifle and cartridge belt, and accompanied by six most ill-favoured savages each carrying a firebrand, we entered the dark forest. Tired out and with overstrung nerves, I looked forward to enjoying a spell of comparative peace and quietness. Stumbling along in single file for upward of an hour, we reached an odd little village where I observed that most of the doors of the small grass huts consisted of elephants' ears hung over the aperture by a lashing of supple vine. Around the village were large stakes, firmly fixed in the ground, in order, I was told, to protect the huts from being trampled down by elephants. Indeed, such precaution appeared to be fully justified, for the boggy ground around the village was deeply marked by elephant tracks.

As my guides, according to African custom, considered it necessary to sit down and relate the entire

story of my arrival to the inhabitants of this forest encampment, we were naturally delayed some time. It was only after long and angry expostulations on my part that we wandered off again through the dense forest, tripping constantly over fallen trees, being scratched and bruised by the thorny creepers and massive festooned vines.

Arriving in swampy ground, we waded for some distance up to our knees in foul mud, when to my surprise a canoe was mysteriously produced. We scrambled into the little craft and commenced pushing and hauling ourselves through the mass of undergrowth. At frequent intervals we were forced to disembark and the canoe was lifted over fallen trees and monster roots, necessitating much delay and many violent arguments. It was, taking it altogether, a most exasperating experience, and I can truthfully affirm that canoeing through the African forest by night is very trying to one's patience. There were sudden sounds of startled birds and monkeys, whilst the splashing of water and the crackling of twigs often betrayed the presence of elephants. The air was damp and cold, and chills crept over my body, until my teeth chattered. Mosquitoes swarmed around us in clouds. Hauling ourselves along by the aid of branches we frequently found ourselves smothered with vicious red ants. It was a dismal journey, and I was truly thankful

when we reached a comparatively clear space in the forest, albeit it was covered by tall bamboo cane some twenty feet in height; but I could at least catch a glimpse of the star-spangled sky. The leading man of my guides informed me that the journey was at an end. We had at last reached the favourite elephant ground I had heard so much of.

My companions then retired with the canoe, promising to return the following day, when the sun was high in the sky, to carry home the meat! Being entirely in their hands, I acquiesced as cheerfully as I could, and stepped ashore into the deep slush.

"Oko! eo oke o." ("Oh, you! We go—we go away.")

I acknowledged their farewell, and listened sadly to the distant voices of my homeward-bound guides. Standing above my ankles in the cold water, thoroughly chilled and weary, with myriads of mosquitoes hovering about me, I never in all my life felt so little inclination to hunt anything. Surrounded as I was by the vast primeval forest, a long day's journey from my single white comrade at Bangala, and fully five hundred miles from the next nearest white man, in the dead of night, and in the land of capricious savages, the feeling of loneliness grew more and more oppressive as the night advanced. With the sense of hearing over-strained, every slight sound in the forest caused an involun-

A sketch at Mobunga

Drawn by the Author

tary start; the great trees, showing black against the star-lit sky, assumed grotesque forms, and I found great difficulty in shaking off a feeling of intense nervous awe.

After floundering about for some time, I at length felt an opening which appeared to be an elephant path. The cane was trodden into the sodden ground, about four feet in width, and the path led straight across the bamboo patch. On either side of the path the cane grew so thickly that I found it almost impossible to penetrate. Making up my mind to remain in this ploughed-up path until day-light, when I hoped to view the elephants, I backed among the sticks and thorns, and tried in vain to be patient. Gusts of wind whistled through the foliage and by degrees the sky became overcast. Rain commenced to fall, and soon the sky seemed rent asunder with terrific flashes of lightning to which there succeeded crashing peals of thunder in startlingly rapid succession.

This tropical storm seemingly arrived as a climax to my misery. In the midst of the storm I distinctly heard elephants forcing their way through the forest in order evidently to reach some open space where they might be safe from falling trees.

In the intermittent flashes of lightning I occasionally got a glimpse of a great ghostly form approaching the cane-patch, and as the storm increased in

fury the sound of elephants stampeding in all directions through the thick mass of bamboos impressed me in a most uncomfortable manner. Their floundering heavy footsteps occasionally seemed to approach within a few yards of me, and I distinctly heard the frightened squeals of baby elephants as they plunged and stumbled in the swamp.

The storm ceased as suddenly as it came, and in the subsequent lull there was a constant dripping of water in the forest and the sound of falling branches. The elephants appeared to be standing motionless, and the air was once more filled with the eternal music of mosquitoes.

With the first indication of dawn my spirits rose, and with the ragged sleeve of my wet shirt I carefully wiped the mud from my rifle. Whilst it was still too dark to distinguish the surroundings, I could plainly hear elephants stirring in all directions. Crawling some little distance along the sloppy path, I gradually made out the silhouette of an elephant's head and back, cutting sharp against the gray morning sky. It was impossible in that light to estimate distance.

Every moment it grew lighter, and I was better able to obtain bearings.

Creeping cautiously forward, I was startled two or three times by that low rumbling sound familiar to elephant-hunters.

The cane-patch appeared to be a perfect haven of refuge for elephants during the storm, for on every side there came audible evidence of their presence. When within about twenty paces of my elephant I was just able to discern his ears flapping spasmodically to beat off the mosquitoes and sand-flies that hovered around his head, and to see his trunk swinging listlessly among the trampled cane as if in search of edible shoots.

Gradually I noticed a certain restiveness, as though the animal suspected danger. Raising and circling his trunk in the air he sniffed in various directions until his head was turned straight towards me. Realising that my presence was discovered, and that there was not an instant to lose, I took a steady aim at his left shoulder and fired. The recoil of my eight-bore rifle almost knocked me backwards, and as I struggled in the cane-entangled slush, enveloped in smoke, I was conscious of a deafening uproar. The rifle report echoed strangely through the forest, and the startled elephants charged madly forward in every direction, crashing through the dense foliage like giant locomotives.

By the time I regained my feet and had crawled aside to be clear from the smoke I found my elephant slowly rising from the ground. I was now well within fifteen paces of the beast and fully realised the necessity of firing a fatal shot. Trembling

with excitement I fired point-blank at the forehead, and quickly stooping below the smoke, I caught sight of a jet of blood spurting from the wound. The ponderous animal fell slowly to the ground—dead. Reloading in haste I took two snap-shots at an elephant rushing past me, without other effect however than to stop his progress. He stood for a moment, gazing at me and twitching his tail. Owing to wet or dirt, I found difficulty in opening my rifle and in spite of frantic efforts I could not move the lever. I can well recall the feeling of blank despair when the wounded beast, with coiled trunk and ears erect, rushed forward with a shrill scream. Darting aside I fell into a swamp hole completely covered with a mass of vine and branches. There I lay breathless for some moments, listening to the flounderings of the wounded elephant. At length the noise died away, and with broad daylight all was still again. In vain I tried to open my gun, but the breech was badly jammed, and I found myself unarmed.

The time dragged slowly on, my anxiety increasing each hour, and I commenced to reflect upon the risks we had exposed ourselves to in visiting Mobunga without taking due precautions for safety. Hunger, excitement and lack of sleep, all combined to render my thoughts morbid. I climbed upon the back of the dead elephant and waited impatiently for my companions of the previous night. It was with

genuine joy that I greeted their arrival. In place of the six men however there now appeared to be hundreds, with several canoes, and their shouts of delight at finding a dead elephant were deafening.

Within an incredibly short time the huge carcass was stripped of flesh. The tusks were hacked from the skull with a native adze, and later on I embarked in a canoe laden almost to the gunwale with reeking meat.

Arriving once more in the village, I was distressed to learn that my Bangala followers had taken fright in the night and had paddled away, leaving me stranded. My successful kill had fortunately the effect of putting every one into a more or less good humour, and by dint of lavish promises I obtained some Mobunga natives and a canoe for my return to Bangala.

YOKA THE SORCERER

YOKA was a Charm-Doctor, a crafty quack who exercised great influence in the land. His name inspired the superstitious inhabitants of the Lukungu valley with a sense of awe and dread.

By following the main incidents in the life of this redoubtable sorcerer, a glimpse at least will be revealed of the system of fetichism and superstition prevailing among the pagan population of the Congo.

It appears that early in life Yoka displayed a quickness of perception that placed him far in advance of his fellows, and that he devoted his superior mental qualities to the study of human nature.

Where all men's minds were held in the bondage of superstition, Yoka very soon realised the advantages to be gained by following the career of a professional sorcerer. Yoka gradually attained the position of an expert in the creation of devices for deceiving others. He artfully contrived to surround himself with an air of mystery by reason of his affecting various whimsicalities of speech and manner.

When once well launched in his new profession, Yoka's powers of invention were sorely taxed to meet

the demands for special amulets and charms, and wooden images, containing the mystic property which would guard his clients against danger or misfortune.

From an obscure corner of his hut Yoka produced a never-failing supply of little packages of mystery, adorned with feathers and smeared with ochre, and never was there a doubt cast upon their efficacy.

It is recorded that Yoka grew rich, that his trade flourished amazingly, and that he became a veritable power in the land, dominating the chiefs; in fact a veritable autocrat.

The life-history of Yoka, as related by contemporaries, recorded that Yoka's wives were sleek and well-fed, that they were chosen from the youngest and most attractive girls of the district; that his hut was the roomiest and best constructed residence in the village. "No rain ever filtered through *his* roof," remarked the narrator, "for the material was so carefully selected and the thatch laid on with so much care." No man dared to be his open enemy.

After the manner of the priests of ancient Egypt, where in fact there appears to have existed a similar condition of superstitious belief, Yoka found it expedient to give to his general actions a mystic sense, the result of which was to inspire fear and dread in the hearts of all around him, rendering everybody submissive to his caprice.

Yoka maintained that he possessed the means of direct communication with Ndoki, the Evil Spirit, and those simple minds, perplexed as they were by the mysteries of life, doubted not.

In that land where life is precarious, where daily existence is threatened at every turn with danger and disease, every effort is made to propitiate the malevolent influences of the Evil Spirit, considered to be all-powerful.

Thus far the narrative of Yoka's life and his attainment to power, although unusual, was in no way extraordinary. But, as the narrative continued, it grew in dramatic interest.

In the easy flowing speech so peculiar to Africans, they described with delightful simplicity the preparations that were made when their chief Ntuku decided to pay an official visit to the Head man of a neighbouring district, some two days march distant, in connection with some petty question of state. From their description it became easy to picture the unwonted bustle and activity in the village on that occasion—the strange garments that were worn, incongruous cast-off clothing exported from Europe, which had been carefully concealed in the furthermost corners of their huts.

It appeared that about noon on the first day's march, the sun being hot, they halted under the friendly shade of leafy trees on a hillside. Here

The sorcerer (*Musée de Nantes*)
From a bronze statue by the Author

some quick eye detected in the distance the form of an elephant, browsing lazily in the high grass of the plain beneath them.

The chief Ntuku, being a redoubtable hunter, stripped himself of his finery and started forth with his long-barrelled flintlock gun. Watched by his crowd of followers, the chief cautiously stalked his quarry. Approaching within fair distance of the elephant, Ntuku fired his antiquated flintlock gun. All was at once enveloped in a cloud of smoke.

As the smoke cleared off, the elephant was seen with elevated head, and the struggling figure of the chief impaled upon one of his tusks: then casting aside the mangled body, the elephant shuffled off towards the distant forest.

In spite of the fact that the elephant's tusk had penetrated his body, the chief still lived, and requested to be carried home to his village.

A rough litter was soon constructed, and the party headed for home. Sorrowful they were, because Ntuku was a popular chief.

Marching slowly until within half an hour of sunset, Ntuku motioned with his hand. By signs he asked for a pipe, and whilst he smoked his eyes were riveted upon the setting sun. Almost at the moment when the sun disappeared behind a distant range of hills, the pipe dropped from the chief's mouth and he died.

Here the native narrative branched off and dealt with the turning-point in Yoka's career. According to the custom of the country the chief's body was swathed in hundreds of yards of cotton cloth, and during the subsequent days of mourning when his wives wailed their laments, Yoka commenced to put into execution a dark scheme whereby he might accuse his enemies of having allied themselves with the elephant to compass the death of the chief.

But in this Yoka overstepped the bounds of his influence. In vain he made efforts by threats, and even attempts at conciliation. All was in vain. His power was broken.

The climax of the narrative described the tragic end of Yoka the Sorcerer.

It appeared that one night, whilst the elders of the village were sitting around the fire, Yoka crept towards them unobserved. Then, springing towards the fire, grasping a keg of gunpowder above his head, the desperate man settled for ever the questions of power and influence and evil-doing.

A huge illuminating flash, a deafening report, and the entire company were blown to pieces. I passed by the scene of the explosion on the day following and saw the leafless trees and debris.

A Batéké

Drawn by the Author

THE MONKEY PEOPLE

A SAD mistake was made when Captain X of the Belgian army quartered three of his negro soldiers in the village of the savage Basoko, the "Monkey People" of Central Africa.

Desiring to establish an outpost in that village, he laboured under the belief that the natives would not interfere with such a small force as three of his men, whereas by leaving a larger body of soldiers he would in all probability excite their hostility, for the Basoko were a wild people.

In the captain's opinion he was acting for the best. He had observed a similar custom practised by the leading Arab buccaneers, further in the interior; but unfortunately he had failed to take note of a precaution which was of vital importance in their system. The Arab plunderers invariably subdued each turbulent tribe of savages before leaving their mere handful of half-armed representatives in their midst.

The Basoko had never been subdued.

The "Monkey People" had not yet heard the resounding report of firearms, and they still strutted arrogantly about their filthy village, wearing flutter-

ing feather head-dresses, and muttering caressing words to their glittering, keen-edged spears.

Captain X's little company of West African Houssa irregulars were duly paraded.

"Corporal Alakai!"

"Yessir."

"Sapristi! Corporal, where are your trousers?"

"The natives, sir! Last night I sleep, they done tief 'em, sir."

"Quel malheur! Ali Bussi! Tête Clever! Fall in!"

The three negroes of incongruous height and appearance, attired in tattered garments of gaudy colours, stepped from the ranks and saluted.

"Attention! Corporal Alakai, I am going to leave you here with Bussi and Clever. In a few months I will return. Clean your guns every day. Here are cartridges. Do not fight. Here are glass beads to buy food. The chief, he promises me to be your friend. Sacré bleu! Ali Bussi! stand up! Do not catch flies while I give you orders. Corporal Alakai, here is your flag."

The captain, who made this speech in broken English, then handed the corporal a faded flag—blue, with a golden star, the emblem of the newly formed Congo State. And it was thus that three negro soldiers from the Niger were left to uphold the dignity of the State alone among cannibals.

Idols, Manyema

In the collection of the Author

When all was ready for departure, the moorings of the steam launch were cast off, and the little vessel drifted into mid-stream. The husky voices of the three Houssas, who were standing up to their waists in water, shouting guttural words of farewell to their comrades, were altogether drowned by the yells of the savages, who danced bravely upon the bank. The little puff of steam which rose from the launch, followed instantly by a shrill whistle, caused a complete panic among the yelling warriors.

A few moments later the little vessel, now travelling swiftly with the current, disappeared behind a forest-clad promontory on its journey of a thousand miles down the Congo.

That same evening the three Houssas, with true African improvidence, celebrated the occasion by a prodigious feast of smoked fish, sugar-cane, and other expensive trifles, the purchase of which made an extravagant inroad into their scanty stock of glass beads. But after this first ebullition of joy, Corporal Alakai and his two companions settled down and lived quietly in their grass hut. After the first minute inspection of all their belongings the natives took but little notice of them.

Although the strangeness of the native language at first barred the Houssas from entering into friendly conversation, yet they possessed ready wit enough to make their wants known.

If apparently but little noticed by the men, the female portion of the community soon came to regard them as continuous objects of attraction. The Basoko women—ill-favoured slaves—were always lurking around their hut, referring to them in gesture, and alternating their gossip by frequent shouts of derisive laughter.

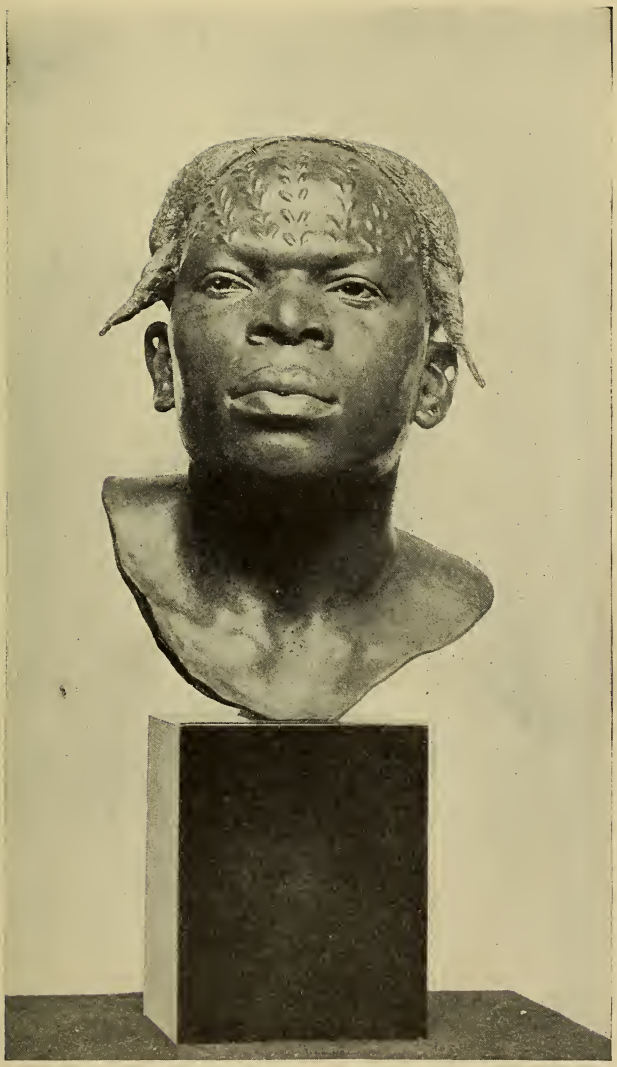
The environment of the three negro soldiers was typical of the country. Scarcely a day or a night passed without a savage orgy, followed generally by a sanguinary combat. The forest at the back of the village continually echoed the discordant cries and wails of erring women being beaten by their tyrant masters.

Sickening vapours arose each day from the dew-sodden huts when the tropical sun poured forth its fierce heat and blinding glare. All was squalor, and the atmosphere was deeply charged with horrible smells.

About a month after their arrival in Basoko, Corporal Alakai was stricken down with fever. One morning, while lying in his hut, carrying on a desultory conversation with his companions, some natives suddenly poked their heads through the small aperture which served for a door, saying:

"Yaka! Sen-nen-ne! Ya-uku. ("Come with us. Come on the great river.")

"Olau! Why?" inquired Ali Bussi.



An Aruimi type

From a bronze by the Author

"We go to catch fine fish. Ya-ŭkŭ! Come with us, friends; come and catch fish," they answered, speaking always their own language.

Said Ali Bussi, in a persuading tone to Alakai:

"Let us go! We can then bring you some good fresh fish."

"Yes," added Tête Clever, as he placed a gourd of water within Alakai's reach. "Two days have passed since you took food. Let us go and obtain for you good food, O Alakai!"

Alakai, usually so alert and active, was now listless. His eyeballs were glazed and bloodshot from the effects of fever, and he answered languidly:

"Tor! Yes, friends; go if it please you."

A few minutes after their departure, Alakai, in changing his position, caught sight of a bundle of small leather-covered scrips of the Koran, charms frequently used by the Houssas as a preservative against misfortune.

"Allah! but they have forgotten their hamalat; may they meet with no ill-luck," said he.

During the whole day Alakai lay in a state of inertia. His limbs ached, but his brain was still active, and during the long noonday hours, when the heat was intense, Alakai's thoughts drifted back to life in his own land far away. In his fevered imagination he pictured to himself the delights and pleasures he would enjoy when his period of service on the Congo

was completed. He dozed during the afternoon until suddenly awakened by the beating of a ponderous drum in the village. It was the first appearance of the new moon, and the big signal drum boomed forth an invitation to the night dance.

With a startled look at finding himself still alone, Alakai crawled to the door of his hut, and then walked with feeble steps toward the river bank, his heart filled with a strange foreboding of evil.

The sun had just disappeared behind the distant trees, a cool breeze was springing up, and the great Congo River had assumed a dull, leaden colour. Alakai shaded his eyes and gazed across the placid sheet of water, but failed at first to see any sign of his companions' return. Peering through the fast-deepening twilight he at length however noticed a large war-canoe being propelled against the current by several natives. They staggered and splashed the water as they clumsily wielded their long-handled paddles.

Alakai grew impatient at their slow approach. Later on, when his ear detected the echoing notes of a wild song, he muttered nervously to himself: "They are drunk. There will be yet another fight to-night. O Ali Bussi, come! Tête Clever, come back to me."

As the huge canoe drew near to the bank, Alakai recognised some of the natives who had invited his

companions to accompany them upon their fishing excursion; but to his dismay, neither of his companions was visible.

With wild yells and drunken shouts the paddlers rushed their canoe towards the bank. Alakai was about to call, to ask after his comrades, when his eyes lit on a sight that chilled his blood.

In the bottom of the canoe he saw a ghastly heap of human limbs.

It instantly dawned upon him that his companions had been murdered by the drunken savages. The next moment his worst fears were realised—the savages were wearing portions of his comrades' clothing.

The canoe was now within a few feet of the bank, and crowds of excited natives from the village were assembling upon the shore, uttering hideous yells. They also had caught sight of the pile of flesh in the canoe.

Alakai shivered with terror. Having murdered his two companions, he knew full well that they would next seek his own life.

He crept stealthily in the deep shadows of the huts until he reached the forest. Then he fled for life, unheeding the lacerating thorns, stumbling and falling in the darkness, until he found himself far away in the mighty forest.

When too weak to proceed further, he collected his strength for a final effort. He clambered up a

festooned vine until he reached a convenient resting-place in the higher branches of a tree. Here he sank back exhausted, his head fell upon his breast, his limbs shook and his teeth chattered.

Alone in the boundless forest, shattered with fever, without food, and the nearest State station more than five hundred miles away!

The utter hopelessness of his position crushed his spirit, and during the next few days Alakai sometimes remained motionless for hours together, gazing vacantly upon the ground.

He was far out of reach of all friendly aid. He knew the natives were hunting him, and he felt prepared at any moment to hear their dreaded voices. He shivered at the thought. The forest and slow starvation appeared to be his only prospect. He roamed about the gloomy woods by day, and each night he clambered into the branches of some tree to escape falling a prey to prowling leopards.

As each day passed Alakai found himself growing rapidly weaker. His only food consisted of raw roots, and the fat white worms he found in rotting wood.

The air of the forest reeked with pungent odours of rank, decaying vegetation; the ground was covered knee-deep with wet, sodden leaves, upon which whole armies of spiteful ants crawled in all directions. Overhead, there was no cheering glimpse of the sky, nothing but the dense canopy of foliage.

All was gloom wherever the feeble man strayed. The grim silence of the forest was only occasionally broken by the call-note of some passing bird, the chattering of monkeys gambolling in the tree-tops, and at night, when the depressing gloom deepened into utter darkness, the forest echoed with the hoarse croaking of frogs.

Nearly thirty days passed by, and Alakai, the once bright and active soldier, was reduced to a pitiable condition. During whole days he would sit upon the sodden ground, rocking himself to and fro, drivelling as one bereft of reason. The strain was undermining his mental power and as each day passed, his mind became more and more centred upon the rich plantations of the village from which he had fled. His body craved food, and the pangs of hunger led him tottering back each day nearer to the savages' plantations.

He was now no longer deterred by fear of capture. At all risks he decided to once more munch sweet sugar-cane and maize.

One morning Alakai awoke to find himself lying in a pool of water beside a decaying log. It had rained heavily during the night, and a flowing stream had formed a pool around him.

He arose with difficulty, for his limbs were stiff and numbed with cold. His scanty clothing hung in tattered remnants upon his wasted body, and as he

straightened himself he became dizzy, staggered, and fell fainting upon the ground. When he recovered consciousness the bees were humming, it was noon.

In the distance he heard the booming of a drum. It was the signal drum of Basoko. With faltering steps he picked his way through the dense undergrowth, now clambering over fallen trees, and then creeping along the sandy bed of a shallow stream upon his hands and knees.

The low booming of the drum continued, and Alakai laboured bravely onwards, as though drawn towards the sound by some mystic spell. The booming of the drum awakened in his heart a half sad feeling of relief. In his disordered fancy the signal drum was calling him, it was sounding forth a message that his sufferings were nearly over.

Buoyed up by visions of an abundant feast in the native plantations, he struggled onwards until he reached the skirts of the forest. There before him lay the long dreamed-of plantation. But at first the glare of the sun blinded him: he had not seen the sun for thirty days.

With aching eyes and shaking limbs he entered the field of ripening maize and commenced to eat ravenously, with tears of weakness and emotion coursing down his grimy cheeks.

After a while he became so overpowered with a feeling of drowsiness that he lay back upon the

ground and was soon in heavy slumber. He dreamt that he heard voices—harsh, cruel voices.

Awakening suddenly, he found himself surrounded by several shouting native women. At first he was dazed, but the grim reality of his position soon dawned upon him, for the next moment he was hauled to his feet and roughly dragged towards the village by his captors—a dozen strong-armed naked women, who shrieked and laughed with savage exultation.

He cast a despairing glance upon the cruel faces of his captors, and his heart sank within him. In the hands of these merciless savages he knew that a horrible fate was in store for him, and he doubted not that he was being led to death.

Upon reaching the village, Alakai was thrown violently to the ground, and his wrists were bound together behind his back. In the meantime crowds of natives gathered round him, chattering and shouting incessantly.

In the midst of the uproar a weird chant was heard. The noisy voices were hushed. Presently a party of singing women approached and heralded the great magician, the "Woto-ya-boti."

The magician, whose body was grotesquely daubed with coloured pigments, bounded forward and executed a fantastic dance. The savage mob droned a monotonous chant, and kept time by clapping their hands.

Halting suddenly and striking a grotesque attitude, the magician said, speaking in a sepulchral tone:—

"Listen all men! It is the day of the new moon. All night we must sing and dance to the good 'Moon Spirit.' Misfortune will fall upon us if we shed blood while the new moon is in the sky, or even before the next sun rises. O men of Basoko!"

The magician's speech was followed by murmurs of disapproval.

Alakai was then bound, hands and feet, to the rough trunk of a palm-tree, and two or three young savages, with glistening spears, mounted guard over him.

When night came, all the wooden drums in the village boomed forth a message of invitation to dance to the good spirit of the new moon.

Alakai looked on in abject misery, at the preparations for the dance. Numbers of crackling log fires were built up, from which blue smoke arose in unbroken columns in the still night air. With joyous shouts both men and women later on commenced the night dance. They formed themselves into two rows, parties from each side then advanced and receded, with sinuous movements of their bodies, the whole gathering at the same time chanting a monotonous song.

Hundreds of naked feet stamped and shuffled upon the ground, their heavy iron bracelets and

anklets jingling and clashing in unison. The deep bass voices of the men followed the shrill falsetto of the women, as each in turn pranced forward, wriggled their bodies, and retired to their column.

The fitful, lurid light of the log fires reflected upon the perspiring bodies of the dancers and their highly polished metal ornaments. The broad-leafed banana-trees and the graceful palms stood out in bold relief against the clear night sky. The hundreds of chanting voices echoed clearly in the distant forest and across the river.

The entire scene with its deep night shadows was both weird and picturesque; but the suffering Alakai remained numbed and indifferent to the wild chants and uncanny antics of the savages.

The hours passed slowly, and at midnight gusts of wind whistled through the branches overhead. A storm of cold rain swept over the village, but still the dance was continued with unflagging spirits. The young men, however, who acted as guards over Alakai slunk off to shelter beneath the eaves of a grass hut, where they huddled up together. Sounds of heavy breathing were soon heard from the little group —they too were sleeping!

Alakai strained and pulled at his bonds until at length he succeeded in freeing his hands. To untie the knotted cords that secured his legs was but a matter of a few moments. At last! The cords were

loose. Alakai's heart beat wildly. Now was his chance to make a dash for liberty. He crept forward. But his effort was in vain. His limbs were numbed, and he fell helpless to the ground with a groan of agony. Instantly the sleeping guards sprang upon him. One young savage wantonly prodded him with his spear.

"Hold, Ngengenwe! Shed no blood before sunrise; it will bring misfortune upon us."

But the cruel spear had pierced Alakai's breast, and a tiny stream of blood trickled to the ground.

Alakai was again made fast to the palm-tree, his bonds being drawn so tight that the grass plaited cords cut into his flesh.

The rain ceased, the fires burnt low, and the voices of the dancers became husky. The gloom increased; it was the hour before the dawn.

Alakai's mind was filled with disjointed fancies.

He started! A sound! He raised his head to listen. It was the fluttering of birds roosting in the tree-tops; they were commencing to plume themselves.

The song of the dancers gradually died away; the village was hushed, only the hum of myriads of mosquitoes filled the air. A gaunt pariah dog occasionally prowled close past Alakai, sniffing the ground in search of food.

When the first gray light of dawn appeared, the village was wrapped in slumber. The picturesque

night-scene was slowly deprived of all its charm. The huts were sodden with rain, the muddy paths were littered with palm-fronds and rubbish and the log fires were burnt out, leaving only heaps of white ashes.

As the light increased, the birds flew off in quest of food; the cane doors of the native huts creaked as they were thrust aside, and dark figures appeared. Before long the village was once more animated, and the natives cast furtive glances in the direction of their prisoner.

Alakai looked on with a stony stare as a group of armed natives approached him. Their head-dresses were bedraggled and awry, and their sullen faces bore traces of the night's exertions. As they gathered in a crowd round Alakai, they muttered angry curses upon the cold. The grey sky grew brighter, and delicate sunbeams appeared.

Hark! A gun-shot! The natives glance at one another in alarm.

A wild shout arises from a distant part of the village.

"Watamba-tamba! The Arab slavers! Run! Run!"

Gun-shots were now heard in rapid succession. The clear morning air was soon filled with hideous shrieks and groans, the clatter of spears, women's screams, and hurrying footsteps.

Alakai was now unconscious.

From all sides white-turbaned figures rushed into the village, capturing men, women, and children, and ruthlessly shooting at other natives more fleet of foot who were speeding to the forest.

The dreaded Arab buccaneers had at last attacked Basoko.

The "Monkey People" were receiving their first lesson in submission.

The white-robed Arabs, guns in hand, soon ransacked the village, and in their search for ivory pestles, war horns, and other valuables they discovered Alakai, bound to the palm-tree.

"Tutu! ame kufa" ("He's dead! leave him"), said an Arab.

"Siyo bwana!" ("No! See! He breathes"), replied a half-caste, unsheathing his dagger and cutting the bonds.

Alakai fell forward heavily.

* * * * *

The Houssa tribal marks, three deep gashes on each cheek, instantly attracted the attention of the Arabs. They recognised him as being of the State service and they treated him kindly. Some months later they handed him over to a Belgian officer of the Congo Independent State, who subsequently passed him over to me at Bangala, saying that he was no good, that he had no sense.

By degrees, and at long intervals, I gathered together the foregoing incidents of Alakai's adventures among the "Monkey People." Although he retained a certain intelligence, his mind was badly shaken, and he was unable to perform the most trivial duty. He was treated by all with sympathetic indulgence.

Alakai would sit alone for hours gazing blankly: his voice was seldom heard. His spirit was broken. He lived in nervous dread of every one around him. Sometimes a group of little children would play about him. Once I remarked a little baby girl, a sweet chubby little black figure, toddling towards him, carrying a snarling pariah puppy by its leg. She attempted to climb upon Alakai's knees. The little puppy was dropped to the ground and yelped. Alakai, startled, jumped to his feet; then looking upon the little child he patted her head and his poor sad face lit up and beamed with pleasure.

The little children were Alakai's only companions.

NGANGA NKISSI

In the village of Mayumbula there dwelt a famous native wizard named Lubaki, at once the most renowned and dreaded man in all the district. He was known as "Nganga Nkissi," the charm doctor, and he belonged to the association of crafty men who represent themselves as being in league with the spirit world, and who thrive by imposing upon the superstitious natives. So great was Lubaki's influence that he absolutely ruled the minds and lives of all the inhabitants of Mayumbula. Chiefs, freemen and slaves were alike under the evil sway of this subtle-minded impostor.

During many months' residence in the district I succeeded in gaining to a certain extent the confidence of the natives; I tended them in sickness, and I studied their language. At first the people were shy and reserved, owing doubtless to their fear of exciting the jealousy of the great Lubaki, and the most prominent of my native friends was a man named Mavonda N'zau, "The Elephant Killer." He was celebrated for his physical bravery, and, indeed, he distinguished himself many times when

accompanying me upon my wanderings. Unhappily the friendship that sprang up between Mavonda N'zau and myself aroused Lubaki's jealousy. By every means in his power the wily charm-doctor endeavoured to slander and to injure the one man whose popularity threatened to interfere with his own influence upon the people. So persistent and malignant were the efforts of Lubaki, that before long Mavonda N'zau found himself shunned and eventually persecuted by his kinsmen. His life was threatened, and often he was forced to seek refuge in my camp.

One day the poor man came rushing towards me in a condition of despair. His only son, a bright little lad ten years old, had been kidnapped, and Mavonda N'zau feared that he had been sold as a slave by Lubaki to a caravan of native ivory-traders who had passed the village of Mayumbula the previous day on their way up country. Filled with pity for the poor fellow, I undertook to make investigations, and at once hastened after the caravan, but I found no trace of Mavonda N'zau's son. Returning again to Mayumbula, I found to my horror that Lubaki had availed himself of my absence to perpetrate another scheme of jealous revenge. In the market-place he had publicly accused the wife of Mavonda N'zau, and the mother of the kidnapped boy, of sorcery.

According to native custom, a person accused of sorcery is obliged to submit to a poison ordeal, a test to indicate their guilt or innocence.

Upon the occasions of accusation of sorcery it is customary for the unfortunate prisoner to partake of a draught of "nkasa," a poisonous decoction prepared from the bark of a special tree. The draught is usually administered at sunrise. During the day numbers of the prisoner's kinsmen congregate upon the scene, where, half intoxicated with palm-juice, they dance around the wretched victim, to whom they offer every species of cruel insult. If by sunset the "nkasa" poison should act as an emetic, the fact is accepted as demonstrating innocence. The simple-minded heathen agree that obviously no evil spirit lay concealed within the body of the accused. On the other hand, should the "nkasa" drug prove a fatal poison, then the justice of the ordeal is fairly established. Every one is then satisfied that the accusation of sorcery has been brought home to the right person and that the evil spirit has been satisfactorily exterminated. The most iniquitous phase of the ordeal is perhaps to be found in the fact that the Nganga Nkissi regulates the strength of the nkasa according to his intentions when administering it to his victim. The judicious expenditure of a few beads, or a kit of fowls, upon the part of the accused friends, is known to influence the potency of the poison draught.

Nyanga Nkissi, the witch doctor

Drawn by the Author

A day was appointed for the wife of Mavonda N'zau to submit herself to the ceremony of "finding the evil spirit." Lubaki was to officiate as the administrator of the poison, and my anticipation of the result of the ordeal offered no prospect of hope; I felt assured that the poor woman's life was doomed.

From the stray remarks I overheard from the natives around the village fires during the night, I thought I had gained a clue to the locality in which the ceremony was to take place. But unfortunately I was misled; I searched the district in all directions, hastening from one wood to another, inquiring eagerly of every native I met, without result. The sun had already risen four hours before I appeared upon the actual scene.

Drawing near to a small strip of forest, growing in the alluvial deposit of a ravine, several miles from Mayumbula, I was suddenly warned of danger by hearing native voices forbidding me to pass. I was, however, by this time so exasperated by Lubaki's inhuman persecutions that I paid no heed to the threatening shouts and forced my way through the scrub. Several guns were fired at me, the gunpowder smoke arose from the bushes on all sides, and small stones and iron slugs whistled over my head. Still I rushed forward through the thicket, until I found myself in an open space, in the middle of the wood,

where the long grass and undergrowth had been trampled.

There, lying groaning upon the ground, I found Mavonda N'zau's wife. She had already partaken of the fatal draught, and was even now apparently in her death agony. I raised her in my arms in order to administer an emetic with which I had provided myself.

The gaudy-coloured paints that had been smeared upon her body by her barbarous accusers, stained my clothes. The natives who were hiding in the underscrub called repeatedly to me to leave her.

"White man go—leave that woman—she harbours an evil spirit in her body!"

Alas! I had arrived too late to save her life. Her face was distorted with agony. Her hands were clenched, her body shook convulsively, she gasped, and her head fell back. As she died, the yells and shouts of her heathen kinsmen filled the air. When at length I left the forest I was half-deafened by the jeers and harsh laughter of the natives, all of them too cowardly to come forth and face me.

One night shortly after this tragedy, and whilst poor Mavonda N'zau lay half delirious with fever, I was awakened by the loud report of a gun, fired within a few feet of my tent. I sprang from my bed and rushed out into the darkness, just in time to rec-

Idols, Manyema

In the collection of the Author

ognise, by the flickering light of a wood fire, the face and form of Lubaki. He was running, with half-crouching body, from a cloud of smoke.

Filled with a conviction that some fresh villainy had been enacted, I pursued him; but he eluded me by doubling among the bushes and the intricate paths. Numbers of excited natives rushed about in every direction, all eagerly inquiring the meaning of the gun-shot in the night. I returned to the place where I had heard the shot fired, and as I drew near my ear was smitten by sounds of wailing and woe. My presentiment of evil was fully endorsed by my subsequent discovery. Mavonda N'zau had been murdered!

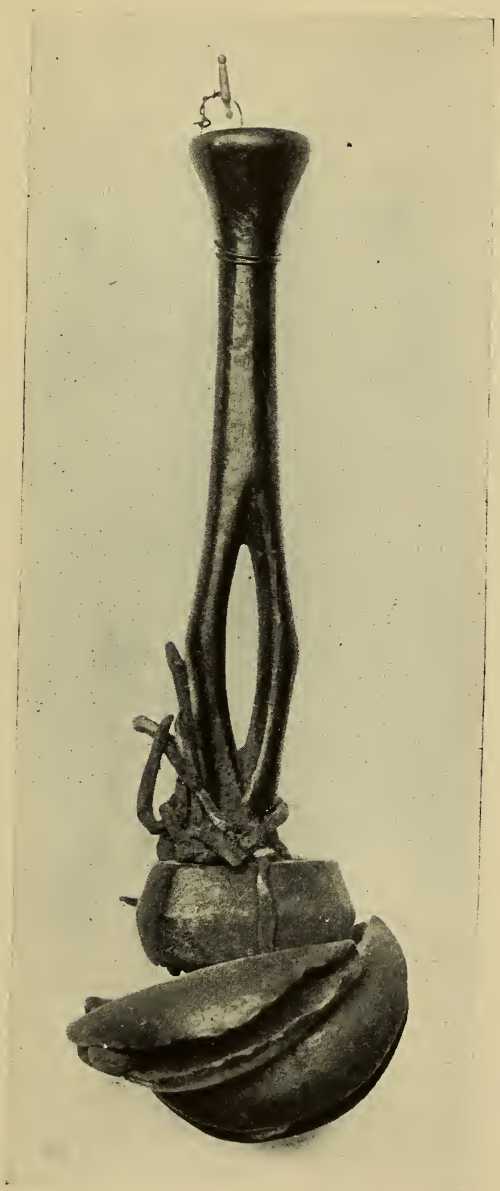
Under cover of darkness Lubaki had evidently crept close to the hut in which Mavonda N'zau lay stricken with fever, and inserting the barrel of his flint-lock gun through the plaited grass wall, he had fired a deadly charge of iron slugs into the body of his victim.

The following day I visited the native chief, who resided in an adjoining village, and formally accused Lubaki of murder. The Nganga Nkissi was promptly captured, and bound to a stake to await his punishment. Hitherto this ruffian had been held in awe, and no man had dared to utter a word of protest against his iniquitous practices, but the cold-blooded treachery of this murder had produced a revulsion

of feeling among the people. Lubaki's evil spell was henceforth forever broken.

One day—it happened to be the day of a great native market which was to be held on an adjacent hill crest—the village was almost deserted. The only distinct sounds were the occasional wail of an infant and the snarling of pariah dogs as they prowled about in search of food. Snatches of a conversation which was being carried on by two women, suggested that something was about to happen. The day was bright and clear. In the distance I could distinguish a large dark crowd of natives gathered on the hill top. A gentle breeze was blowing from that direction, conveying an indistinct murmur, and drawing nearer I could hear the rising and falling inflections of hundreds of excited voices.

In the centre of the market-place, Lubaki the "Nganga Nkissi" had been buried in a hole, from which his head was alone visible. The village executioner, a muscular native, was bidden forward by the chief. He carried in his arms a large rock, weighing at least a hundredweight. At a given word, the great stone fell upon Lubaki's head.



Witch rattle, Bangala
In the collection of the Author

THE FUNERAL OF AN AFRICAN CHIEF

Official duties necessitated my visiting the district of Bolobo, a flourishing and densely populated series of native villages situated on the south bank of the great Congo River, about six hundred miles from the Atlantic coast.

The natives of Bolobo, like most other primitive Africans, are keen traders, dealing mostly in natural produce and using cloth, ivory, iron, and slaves as mediums of currency.

Although not cannibals, they are notoriously cruel, frequently torturing their slaves in most barbarous and inhuman fashions. In appearance, the people of Bolobo represent a somewhat higher form than usual, of the negro Bantu type.

They are notoriously avaricious, and are known to be the richest and most successful traders of the Middle Congo.

Some few days before my arrival the great chief of Bolobo had died, and I found the district in a state of wild excitement, for on the particular day of my visit the body of the chief was to be buried

in state, with all the peculiar and ghastly obsequies characteristic of heathen African savages.

Taking with me four armed negro soldiers, I strolled along the narrow village streets, through avenues luxuriant with palms and banana-trees, in the direction of the palaver-ground—a cleared space in front of the dead chief's former abode.

In the distance I could hear the mournful wailing of many women, and it was in that direction I turned my steps. On my way I passed several groups of sullen-faced savages, standing half-concealed in the dense foliage.

Armed with murderous-looking knives and spears, the men wore feather head-dresses, and their faces were blackened with palm-oil and charcoal: they scarcely acknowledged my salutation, and they all seemed excited and absorbed in conversation.

Drawing near to the place from whence the wailing women's laments filled the air, I noticed several naked men and women, with their arms and legs manacled, and their necks secured in the branched forks of heavy poles. These unhappy people, I learnt, were the slaves and wives of the deceased chief. A few steps further brought me within view of a most extraordinary spectacle.

In the middle of a clear space—the palaver-ground, surrounded by grass huts, backed by a tall palm forest—about three hundred naked women,

Bolobo

Photograph taken by the Author

their faces and bodies bedaubed with white and red chalk, were kneeling and swaying their bodies to and fro, as if keeping time to their sorrowful moaning.

In the centre of this curious gathering the body of the dead chief was placed in a sitting posture upon a wooden dais. The head was surmounted by a huge feather head-dress. The face and body were painted white, with a broad black stripe about two inches wide extending down the face from forehead to chin. The body, which was visible to the waist, was dotted with large yellow spots, and the arms were painted red. Two old crockery soup-plates—obtained in course of barter from the coast traders—were placed on each breast, supported by a string around the body. Inside the arms were placed the decorated stocks of two inverted flintlock guns. A strip of yellow cloth was tied around the neck and elbows, and upon each wrist was placed a collection of highly polished iron bracelets. In front of the body, upon the ground, stood an array of quaint wooden images, fetishes and charms of every description common to the people of that district.

Although it was late in the afternoon the air was hot and heavy and the crying women's energetic demonstrations of woe caused streaks of perspiration to trickle down their painted bodies. The uproar of the mourners became so distressing to me that I turned away and strolled in a maze of small side-

paths. Here I continued to meet groups of armed and excited natives eagerly engaged in discussing some momentous topic, and I also discovered several more captives bound to the centre posts of the grass huts.

Although upon ordinary occasions a white man's presence in their villages would have created no small sensation, I was surprised to find that little heed was paid to me, and I was allowed to wander unmolested among the huts.

Almost immediately after sunset a series of huge bonfires were lit at one end of the principal village. Hastening forward I found a gathering of two or three hundred natives, with fluttering feather head-dresses and clanging metal ornaments, dancing in a state of absolute frenzy. The sound of their deep bass voices as they sang, the incessant drum-beating, and the distant wailing of the mourners created an indescribable uproar. The air was filled with dust and was tainted with the smell of heated African bodies and a sickly odour from the log fires. The evening breeze occasionally wafted the columns of smoke across the wild revellers, momentarily hiding them from view. By the lurid glow of the huge log fires, despite the almost fiendish appearance of the savages, I was deeply impressed with the vivid effect of the scene, with its action, and with its striking contrasts.

Bolobo

Photograph taken by the Author

As my eyes grew more accustomed to the surroundings I observed many natives dancing at the edge of a deep hole which had been recently dug in the ground. Whilst leaning forward to obtain a clearer view, and conjecturing upon the object of the wild proceedings, I was startled by a mighty shout uttered from hundreds of hoarse throats. Turning, I saw several men forcing their way through the multitude in the direction of the dark abyss. A jingling sound of bells heralded a procession of dancing figures, whose forms stood forth in bold relief as they passed in front of the blazing fires. A space was cleared in front of the hole and in a few moments there bounded forward the great charm-doctor, painted and bedecked with leopard skins and rattling charms, outward tokens of the absolute ruler of the destinies of heathen African savages.

This hideous looking creature, with whitened eyelids and body smeared with fowls' brains and blood, commenced the dance of death. With sinuous movements of the body he pranced around the clear space, kicking up a perfect cloud of dust, and chanting a quaint savage song. Round and round, each time faster, whirled the uncanny figure. At length he stopped, bathed in perspiration, dusty and bedraggled, and seated himself at the edge of the hole.

Another hideous shout rent the air. Ten women, the former wives of the deceased chief, with hands and feet bound, were dragged forward and placed upon the ground in front of the charm-doctor.

Shortly afterwards a number of young men, former slaves of the chief, were also brought forward to the brink of the hole. Then amidst a scene of wild confusion the corpse of the great chief, now swathed in yards of cotton and grass cloth, was borne forward.

Above the heads of the swaying crowd I caught sight of dark bodies being hurled into the hole. I could just distinguish the agonised shrieks of women—the unfortunate wives who were being sacrificed.

The body of the chief was next placed in the hole. The crowd surged and swayed and shouted even more vociferously than ever when a hundred hands commenced to heave the earth into the living tomb of the chief's wives, who were thus buried alive. Hemmed in by the crowd, I found myself unable to retire from the horrible scene. The hole was soon filled in, and crowds of natives then danced upon the spot.

The first of the slaves was now brought forward. His head was fixed in a framework, suspended to an overhanging branch. A bright gleam of the executioner's knife, followed by a frantic yell from the

multitude, denoted that the first of the numerous band of the late chief's slaves had been decapitated.

Shocked by the sight I made a final and successful effort to escape from the ghastly scene. A few minutes brought me to the river-side, where my canoe was moored. A few hasty words to my followers, and we drifted out upon the river. A white fog and darkness soon hid the Bolobo shore from our sight, but the entire night was haunted by the roar of voices and the sound of incessant drum-beating.

TIPPO TIB [1]

The most prominent of all the so-called Arabs engaged in Central African slave-raiding was Tippo Tib. His real name was Hamad bin Mohammed; his father was a half-caste Arab of Zanzibar, and his mother was a full-blooded African slave from Mrima near Tanganyika.

The nickname "Tippo Tib" was bestowed upon him by the natives, who with their natural system of native expression, ever simple and literal in its methods, found a spontaneous and appropriate name by associating the famous Arab leader with the unwonted sound of gun-firing, whence the derivation of "tip, tip," or "Tippo Tib."

Tippo Tib's experiences of savage Africa were unique. It is difficult to imagine that any man could have passed through more exciting adventures than he; surely no man of our epoch has witnessed more bloodshed and suffering.

He was a tall, powerfully built man, with short, grizzly beard, very black skin, discoloured eyeballs, thick lips, beautifully white teeth and afflicted with

[1] Tippo Tib died near Zanzibar in 1907.

a peculiar nervous twitching of the eyelids. He was benevolent in appearance and gentle in his manner. He impressed me as being courteous and dignified. He seemed to be full of restrained force. To me personally he was always kind and amiable, and it is recorded that on many occasions he rendered valuable assistance to European travellers, more especially perhaps to Livingstone, Cameron, Stanley and Weissmann. He was possessed of personal virtues which contrasted strangely with his professional depravity.

The advent of the Arab slave-raiders in the country to the west of Nyangwe under the command of the notorious Tippo Tib dates from the year 1877, the year in which Stanley accomplished his memorable journey across Africa from Zanzibar to the mouth of the river Congo. It was due in fact to the accomplishment of this famous journey of Stanley's that the Arab slave-raiders combined together and followed Stanley westward down the Lualaba River. Nyangwe had hitherto been their furthermost western point.

By following Stanley down the Lualaba River as far as the rapids of Kizingiti, more popularly known as Stanley Falls, the Arabs entered uninterruptedly upon what was to them a veritable Eldorado. They were quick to avail themselves of the chance of plundering the enormous regions wherein primitive

savages had accumulated great stores of elephant tusks. For over twenty years an enormous area of country became the hunting-ground of Arab free-booters. The prowling hordes of man-hunters were vanquished in the year 1897, their final downfall being accomplished by the late Baron Dhanis, a Belgian officer of great ability. The account of the overthrow of the Arabs has been most graphically described by Mr. Hinde,[1] who accompanied Baron Dhanis throughout his campaign.

During the years 1887–88, when the infamous traffic of the Arab slave-raiders was at its height, circumstances led me to pass many months in the central region of the Arabs' operations, where incidents of gross barbarity were of almost daily occurrence.

The tusks of elephants have always been esteemed as currency, for purposes of purchase and exchange. To this fact may be attributed the attempts of the Arab raiders to penetrate the remote regions where stores of ivory had been accumulated through uninterrupted ages. The scene of their operations was in the vicinity of the native villages where the forest was generally more or less clear, the larger trees being cut down some twenty or thirty feet from the ground by means of a stage of poles, a process which saves the extra labour of cutting through the base of the hardwood trees the tall trunks of which, left

[1] "The Fall of the Congo Arabs," by S. L. Hinde (Methuen).

Tippo Tib

Photograph taken by the Author

standing, resemble ghostly ruined columns, particularly by moonlight; whilst the enormous limbs that have been cut off are generally left lying around the village to serve as a means of protection against the danger of sudden attack.

Occasionally an encircling stockade of logs surrounds a village; the narrow gateway, scarcely wide enough for an ordinary man to squeeze through, being provided with a heavy log suspended from above, after the fashion of a portcullis.

The villages themselves were composed of groups of meagre and dilapidated grass huts.

The erratic path followed by the Arabs was thick with mud and littered with decaying vegetation, and was underlaid by a slippery network of roots, while the lofty stately forest trees towering overhead created a perpetual semi-darkness. Below, young trees and thick bushes all strove for mastery.

No sun's rays ever penetrated this grim solitude. Hornbills and eagles lived aloft, monkeys in the branches, and ants of various species held sway below. It seemed as if Nature had run wild in the magnificent profusion and wreckage of timber, the whole scheme of the forest giving an impression of excess—a superabundance of generosity.

The general custom of the raiding Arabs was to surprise the village, and to capture as many as possible of the fleeing natives. The captives were subse-

quently liberated upon the payment of tusks of ivory as ransom. When it appeared that the natives' store of elephant tusks was totally exhausted, friendly overtures were made by the Arabs, and in a short space of time the utmost good-humour would apparently exist between the natives and their former persecutors. The natives bore no malice. They regarded the Arabs in the light of men who had made a good bargain. The element of power is omnipotent in the savage mind.

The native inhabitants of that part of the great Congo forest were typical savages, whose lives were largely identified with brutality and cannibalism. Under the baneful influence of the Arabs these savage attributes were encouraged, and in most of the Arab raiding expeditions there were bands of natives themselves who aided the raiders by piloting them towards the village homes of their neighbours. Their reward for so doing consisted of the bodies of their kinsmen who were slain in the attack. It was no unusual experience to witness the women of a native caravan, who were acting as allies of the Arab raiders, carrying portions of human flesh in baskets slung upon their backs by means of a band which passed across their foreheads, to serve as provisions for their journey.

In this way the marauders were led, under the guidance of the natives themselves, and similar proceed-

ings would commence in an adjacent district, the customary compact always being agreed upon, which allotted the bodies of the slain and wounded for consumption as recompense to the guides for their services.

With such slight variations in their methods as may have been due to circumstances, the hordes of half-caste cut-throats conducted their nefarious crusades during upwards of twenty years.

The natives were armed merely with knives and spears. In spite of long practice in the kind of petty warfare that is common to the wild tribes of Africa, they were absolutely wanting in the elements of simple organisation which would aid them to repel an attack made by a superior force. Hitherto, in the peculiar warfare they had practised against each other they had at least fought upon conditions of more or less equality; but the advent of the Arabs confounded them, and the native tribes soon disbanded. The despairing savages, driven from their former homes, mystified and cowed, took refuge in the wildest and most inaccessible parts of the forest, where they were reduced to preying upon each other after the manner of wild beasts.

With reference to the slave-raiders it should be remembered that although they consisted of companies of half-castes of Arab and African blood, the majority of the men were natives from the great

Manyama country. These same Manyama, born under the Arab yoke—for it is many years since that country fell into the hands of the marauders from Zanzibar—had grown up under lawless conditions, and subsequently became professional men-hunters under leaders of Arab extraction, who organised and planned their methods of attack.

* * * * *

In company with Tippo Tib and several Arab chiefs I witnessed a tragedy. From a village on the opposite bank, above the Stanley Falls where the current was powerful, two natives manned a large canoe and paddled towards us.

Soon they found themselves powerless to combat the swift current, and each moment they were swept nearer to the roaring Falls. I shall always remember the piteous attitude of the poor men on the brink of the Falls, just before the canoe plunged down; their gestures of clutching the air, as the canoe was swept over and disappeared in the roaring torrent.

The Arabs remained unmoved. One of them quietly remarked:

"It was a pity to lose such a fine canoe."

* * * * *

At Kizingiti, during one of our long evening conversations, I inquired of Tippo Tib the reason for his inhabiting such miserable quarters. I said in Kiswahili:

"See! The rain comes through your roof, rats run over your floor, the wind blows through your walls. Yet this is the house of Tippo Tib, the Arab chief."

"Ah!" he replied, "it is better that I should live in a house like this, because it makes me remember that I am only an ordinary man, like others. If I lived in a fine house with comforts I should perhaps end by thinking too much of myself."

Tippo Tib lived alone.

* * * * *

On one occasion when I was staying as the guest of Tippo Tib there was a great commotion. The Arabs were greatly excited and reported that there had been a miracle. A tree which had for many weeks lain upon the ground had suddenly re-erected itself again during the night.

The explanation of the matter I found to be very simple. It appeared that in cutting firewood, some women had docked the branches of the fallen tree. Being relieved of the weight of its branches, its powerful roots which still remained in the ground had drawn it up again to an upright position.

* * * * *

How incongruous it all was, that the Arabs, who persecuted and butchered the natives without the slightest sentiment of mercy, were all earnestly devout in their religious observances!

I was always impressed by the scrupulous personal cleanliness of the Arab leaders; their regard for appearances contrasted so strangely with the surroundings. As a rule in camp they wore spotless white robes, and I remember noticing the effect that these white garments produced upon the forest savages. Accustomed as they were to a perpetual environment of half-tone colour in everything around them, the Arabs' white robes represented to them a complete novelty. I frequently observed the natives shielding their eyes when in the presence of the Arabs, for the white robes appeared to be even more dazzling to their eyes than the light of the sun itself.

* * * * *

In answer to a missionary who was calling him to account for the awful massacres and the appalling number of lives for which he was responsible, Tippo Tib replied blandly:

"Ah, yes! You see, I was then a young man. Now, look! my hair is turning grey. I am an old man, and shall have more consideration."

* * * * *

A well-known saying among Tippo Tib's Arabs was: "The gun is the King of Africa."

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN DEANE

The name of Captain Deane will always be remembered in Congo history as the defender of Stanley Falls against the attack of the Arabs in 1886.

Captain Deane's adventures in the Congo region of Central Africa were varied and dramatic. The following cursory outline of the deeds which characterised the closing chapters of his career will afford some idea of his physical pluck and his singular powers of endurance.

In the early part of the year 1886, Captain Deane, who had already seen considerable active service in the newly created Congo Independent State, was instructed to proceed to the far interior and to take command of the State station at the Falls. The object of his mission was to afford protection to the natives, by preventing the Arab buccaneers from continuing their bloodthirsty raids.

In the previous year, Captain Deane and his followers had already met with a tragic disaster when on their way to the same destination. In a labyrinth

of channels of the Upper Congo River known as Monungeri, about fourteen hundred miles from the coast, the savages attacked his camp at midnight during a heavy storm. Captain Deane was very severely wounded, a spear penetrating his left thigh. Nearly half his negro soldiers were killed. About the same time that Captain Deane was about to make his second attempt to reach his post, after a tardy recovery from his wound, I was appointed to the command of the station of Bangala, a very populous district midway between Stanley Falls and Stanley Pool, which, it may be well to mention, are separated by a distance of eleven hundred miles. As our journeys lay in the same direction, we travelled five hundred miles together, as far as Bangala.

On the way we halted one day at Lukolela, and visited the grave of an Englishman, Kemble Keys, who had been killed by a buffalo in 1884. With a sentiment of sympathy for our unfortunate countryman, we cleared away the tangled undergrowth and rearranged the piles of stones that marked the lonely resting-place of a brave young fellow. In doing so we each preserved a few leaves from a tropical vine that grew upon the spot.

In due time we separated. Ten months passed away, and in the meantime I had occasion to travel down country to the caravan track of the cataract region. One evening I pitched my tent beside a

The Congo at Mongalla

Drawn by the Author

native market-place where the noisy Africans babbled and quarrelled over their gourds of frothy palm wine. Suddenly I heard distant shouts, and above the hubbub of the market I distinguished the notes of the Zanzibari caravan song. Soon I detected the advancing leaders, loaded with boxes, rifles, and other odds and ends of equipment which figure in every white man's march in Central Africa.

A few minutes later I observed two stalwart natives bearing a hammock upon a pole. I advanced, and as the hammock was lowered I saw first a thin wasted hand and then a blanched haggard face with sunken eyes, which I was shocked to recognise as that of Captain Deane. As I helped the thin, feeble figure to alight, I could scarcely believe that it was the same man with whom I had parted but a few short months before. That evening when all was quiet, Captain Deane lay before my camp fire and in a feeble voice he related the story of his adventures at the Falls, and he told me of the tragic disasters which had attended his mission.

It appeared that very shortly after Captain Deane reached his destination, the Arabs took offence at the way in which he commenced to fortify the little station which was situated in their midst. By the Administration Captain Deane had been promised additional forces and an increased supply of ammunition, in order that he might be adequately

equipped for all emergencies. But the promise was not fulfilled and Captain Deane was doomed. Owing to the great distance from the station of Stanley Pool, which was then the base of supplies for the Upper Congo, the river steamers were only despatched to the Falls at long intervals, ranging over six to nine months, and consequently Captain Deane had to give up all hope of relying upon extra aid. His forces consisted of a second in command, Lieutenant Dubois, a Belgian army officer; about eighty Houssa soldiers, negroes from the west coast of Africa; and sixty savages, recruits from the cannibal tribes of Bangala.

Within a month of Captain Deane's arrival it became evident to him, on account of the large forces of fighting men who were daily taking up their quarters in the vicinity, that the Arabs were entertaining hostile intentions.

A crisis soon arrived. A native woman, a slave of the Arabs, one day fled to Captain Deane's station for protection, affirming that she had been brutally ill-used. The poor woman was befriended and upon an assurance for her future good treatment being obtained from her owner, she was delivered back to the Arabs. A few days later the same woman returned to the station, her body covered with wounds and bruises. Thereupon Captain Deane decided to give the woman the option

of remaining in the station as a haven of refuge. The Arabs demanded her release. Captain Deane informed them that his duty was to protect all people who were in trouble and who sought his protection.

Immediately after this incident active hostility commenced. The odds against Captain Deane were literally hundreds to one. In addition to the smallness of his force, he was dismayed to find that the caps of the bulk of his rifle cartridges were rendered useless by damp.

For nearly sixty consecutive hours Captain Deane and Lieutenant Dubois fought alongside their men. The Arabs' numbers were continually increasing and they were approaching from various directions, under cover of earthworks which they threw up in the darkness. Their repeated attacks were as regularly repulsed, with heavy losses, and their fury at being thwarted by such an insignificant force passed all bounds. An example of the value of intelligent leadership was forcibly demonstrated. The Arabs' men were undisciplined and wild, whilst the little garrison in the State Station fought calmly and systematically, with highly effective results. On the fourth day the Houssa soldiers laid down their guns in despair. Their sergeant-major said:

"Sir, our cartridges are bad; we have shot all the good ones. Can we not escape?"

Captain Deane angrily replied that he would shoot any man who attempted to desert him.

"Very well, sir; please shoot us. We must die; there is no hope; and we would rather be shot by an Englishman than have our throats cut and be tortured by the Arabs."

When the sun set that day the station was doomed.

In the darkness all Captain Deane's followers with the exception of the sergeant-major, two other Houssas, and a faithful savage, fled panic-stricken to the river-side, where they embarked in all the available canoes, paddled away with the swift current, and were soon out of hail.

Captain Deane and Dubois finding themselves deserted, the question arose as to whether they should also attempt to escape, or whether they should stay and give up their lives in the station. Lieutenant Dubois proposed abiding by the toss of a coin. Twice the result was in favour of their making an attempt to escape; but each time Captain Deane shook his head and decided to stay. The third time the coin fell it was again in favour of departure. This trifling incident decided their fortunes. The defective ammunition was piled in an enormous heap, a fuse was lighted, and so arranged that half an hour would elapse before igniting the inflammable pile, thereby giving them a chance of escape before their departure would be discovered by the ever-watchful Arabs.

In wading across the narrow rocky channel which separated the island upon which the station was situated from the mainland, Lieutenant Dubois slipped and was carried away by the powerful current. Captain Deane plunged after him and succeeded in keeping him afloat until they were swept upon a jagged rock. Both were thoroughly exhausted, and with the words: "I die!" poor Lieutenant Dubois fell back in the water and was seen no more. The next minute, whilst Captain Deane was being dragged ashore by his four faithful Houssas, the Stanley Falls Station was blown to atoms by the explosion of upwards of a ton of cartridges.

During the next twenty-nine days Captain Deane and his four followers crawled through the forest, hiding by day from the Arab search-parties, and exposed by night to the prowling leopards and many other dangers. Their food consisted only of wood-worms and fungus and by degrees their bodies became so reduced and emaciated that they lacked the strength to travel. During all this time there was no ray of hope of subsequent escape to cheer them. They all felt that they were doomed to die, either by starvation, at the hands of the savages, or from the Arabs' cruel torture.

In the meantime, the men who had deserted from Stanley Falls and proceeded down the Congo in canoes, had been waylaid by the natives; and, with

the exception of one small party, who luckily took their canoe through unfrequented channels, all were killed and eaten by the cannibals. The surviving party reached Bangala and told their sad story. A steam launch was immediately prepared for the journey of five hundred miles up to Stanley Falls, and without loss of time a party proceeded to the relief of Captain Deane.

Rather more than a fortnight later this launch steamed within view of the ruins of the Falls Station. A black heap of ashes was all that remained of the station buildings. A deadly volley from an Arab ambuscade warned the occupants of the launch to retire; and reluctantly the helm was put over and the little craft drifted down in midstream. There could be no doubt in the minds of the relief party that all was lost, and that their two white comrades had fallen.

Two days later, a native was seen standing upon the rocks by the riverside, beckoning the occupants of the launch to approach. From him they learnt that earlier that same day in the forest, Captain Deane and his four faithfuls were surprised by the savages. Captain Deane, naked and exhausted, lay resting against the trunk of a tree. A savage approached with poised spear. Deane raised his rusty revolver, the only article he had preserved, and pulled the trigger. The cartridge missed fire!

Before he could repeat the action the savage was standing over him. Captain Deane closed his eyes, expecting the stab from the broad, keen blade; but the savage recognised in him a former friend. The spear was thrown aside and Captain Deane was conveyed to the native village. It was here that he was found by the relief party.

This was the story I gathered from Captain Deane during the night we camped together.

Twelve months from that time Captain Deane was back in Africa at Lukolela elephant hunting. Here he met his death. A wounded elephant charged and stabbed him with one of its tusks.

By a strange coincidence the grave of Captain Deane at Lukolela is alongside that of Kemble Keys, from which Deane and I had plucked the weeds two years before. Both men were killed by wild animals; both were of the same country; and their graves side by side are in the African jungle, eight hundred miles from the sea.

A FOREST DRAMA

ALONE, in a dark corner of his tent, toying with the beads of his rosary, sat Osmani bin Seyf. His swarthy Arab face was drawn and careworn, and his eyes were downcast in thoughtful mood.

During many weeks, with a dogged determination that was surely worthy of a better cause, Osmani had led his caravan of Manyema marauders and captives through the dismal depths of the great African forest in search of human prey. Day by day they had trudged through thorny undergrowth, beneath the impenetrable canopy of primeval trees; and each night they had slept hungry and forlorn upon the sodden ground, in the vitiated atmosphere of decaying vegetation.

The region they had traversed was uninhabited.

That afternoon however a Manyema follower had been wounded by a wooden spear, adroitly concealed in the bushes by the side of a well-worn elephant track.

Here at last was an evidence of man.

The caravan had halted, formed an effective zereba, and Osmani had despatched scouts to survey the vicinity.

"Hodi!" cried a voice from without.

Osmani started from his reverie and instinctively reached towards the loaded rifle by his side.

"Karib!"

A grass cloth curtain was drawn aside, revealing the figure of an armed negro.

"Ah! Khalifan!"

"Salaam Bwana!" The negro crossed his hands upon his breast and bowed.

"Khabari gani?" ("Speak, what news?")

"Good news," replied the negro, mindful of preserving a good omen; "the scouts have returned."

"Vema! And what have they found?"

In a few words the negro explained that the scouts had discovered traces of a large native village, situate about two hours' march to the eastward of their encampment.

Osmani's face instantly lightened. "It is well," said he. "The sun is now setting. Two hours before the dawn we march upon that village. To-night, no fires, no noise. Sikia?"

"Our master's words are understood."

"Haya! May Allah preserve us!" and Osmani waved his hand in token of dismissal.

With a profound salaam the negro withdrew. Sentinels were posted, and soon the camp was wrapped in slumber.

The night air grew cold. A storm swept over the forest. The rain filtered through the thick

foliage overhead and trickled in streams upon the naked bodies of the miserable wanderers, causing them to grumble, and to crouch together in groups.

It was still dark and cheerless, when Osmani emerged from his tent.

"Similla! Similla! Make way there for Bwana Osmani!"

Silent and sullen the Manyema marauders arose; they stretched their stiffened limbs, and buckled their ammunition belts tightly around their waists. Each man rolled a strip of dirty white cotton-cloth around his head, turban-wise, to serve as a discriminating mark in the coming fray.

The camp, containing numerous native slaves captured in former raids, together with a valuable stock of elephant tusks, was left in charge of fifty well-armed Manyema allies of Osmani.

"Tendele! Tendele, upesi!" The order to march echoed through the camp, and in a few minutes Osmani and his marauders started forth in single file. No word was spoken. The only sounds that betokened their progress were a slight swishing of leaves and the muffled tread of naked feet upon the spongy ground.

The attacking party plodded onwards through the dark forest until they came within sight of the village clearing.

Dawn was just breaking when the first deadly volley was fired, followed an instant afterwards by shouts of "Allah-'llah-la!" as the brutal assailants rushed upon their prey. Women and children, shrieking and crying, fled in all directions, dazed by the sudden onslaught. Fowls flew cackling towards the woods. Men's deep voices shouted incoherently, but above the thrilling uproar of gun-shots, cries, and groans, the fatal "llah-la-ihu" of the Manyema sounded loud and relentless as they crashed through the bushes into the midst of the multitude of panic-stricken savages, chasing the black figures that darted hither and thither, hurling them to the ground, and binding them with strips of plaited grass cord.

The sulphurous smoke from the raiders' guns, combining with the early morning mist, produced a fog, which settled in an almost impenetrable cloud upon the scene; in the obscurity of which the Manyema guns flashed forth tongues of flame.

Osmani had now lost all control over his frenzied mob, and their iron slugs whizzed and whistled through the air in all directions.

In endeavouring to penetrate the dark cloud of fog and smoke, the Arab leader suddenly found himself face to face with a burly savage, who bounded towards him, brandishing a huge, sickle-shaped knife. Osmani raised his revolver and fired. The savage

groaned, and fell heavily to the ground. But Osmani's aim had not proved fatal, for the savage recovering from the shock endeavoured to rise.

The Arab stepped forward. "A curse upon you! Die!" The revolver was levelled at the native's head, Osmani's finger tightened upon the trigger, and as he was about to fire he was startled by a piercing scream.

"Hey! Hoyo!" cried a female voice at his elbow, and the next moment a native girl sprang forward and threw herself at his feet. Glancing downward Osmani caught his breath. The naked savage girl's beauty fascinated him. Her mute appeal to spare the wounded native's life was answered, for Osmani's hand dropped to his side. He paid no heed to the groaning savage. His eyes were riveted upon the graceful form at his feet.

A hurried footstep behind him caused him to start and turn. The negro Khalifan ran forward.

"Hey, Bwana! Greatly have we feared for our master's safety; we have searched in every place for you."

Pointing to the kneeling girl and the wounded savage—whose fate had been so strangely averted—Osmani waved his hand, saying:

"Bind them, bind them both! See that the girl escapes not. Bring her to me in my camp at sunset."

Gradually the firing and tumult ceased. A cool refreshing breeze dispelled the heavy cloud of mist and smoke, revealing the victorious raiders swaggering through the devastated village leading and driving scores of miserable captives, who slunk along in awed silence, with bowed heads and shivering limbs.

Then, in complete contrast to the former scene, shone the early morning sun in all its radiance. Its bright beams glinted through the distant trees and fell upon the desolated scene, the narrow streets obstructed by the bodies of the slain, and upon the smouldering framework of many a home. Little sunbirds, with resplendent plumage, hovered around the trampled bushes, swarms of flies and bees filled the air with continuous buzzing, and large zephyr-winged butterflies soared and circled above the ruin.

By noon the wretched captives were herded together, and Osmani and his heartless minions commenced the return march to their forest encampment. The captives were driven in single file, and occasionally some of the elated raiders pranced down on either side of the line, executing a wild dance and singing snatches of war-songs, which echoed strangely through the gloomy woods. Guns were occasionally fired, out of pure wantonness, causing the terrified natives to start and tremble.

In loud harsh voices the Manyema raiders blustered and bragged of their cruel prowess, and cursed

their ill fortune in permitting so many of the natives to escape them during the attack.

The arrival in the encampment was distinguished by triumphant shouts and howls. The marauders were beside themselves with delight, and the interval between their arrival and the setting of the sun was occupied by drinking and feasting.

After securing their captives by means of grummets and forked sticks, the successful raiders gathered together in groups around blazing log fires. Huge gourds and earthenware jars of fermented palm-juice, which constituted a particularly well-favoured portion of the spoils, were produced, and by degrees Osmani's followers relapsed into a state of maudlin drunkenness.

Just as darkness settled upon the forest, Khalifan the negro approached Osmani's tent, leading his female captive by the wrist.

"Bwana! In obedience to your words I have brought this heathen girl."

"Ha! This is the girl who stayed my hand when I would have shot. Question her, O Khalifan!"

The negro turned to her. The girl's eyes were downcast, but in answer to Khalifan's queries she mumbled a brief reply.

"It is Allah's mercy to let this heathen say that she begged her father's life."

"Oh, her father was it? A powerful man, Khalifan, who nearly killed thy master."

"Allah be praised for our master's preservation," muttered the negro fervently.

"Inquire her name."

After a few words with the girl, Khalifan replied:

"Master! May it please you, her name is Tinola."

"It is well. Tell her that she enters my harem."

Khalifan explained his master's words. Tinola cast one hopeless glance around her, then in despair she threw herself upon the ground and cried piteously.

"A curse upon her cries! Make her cease!" roared Osmani, angrily.

Khalifan's endeavours to pacify the savage maiden were futile. Springing to her feet, Tinola struggled wildly with the giant negro. Her cries and screams at length attracted the attention of several of Osmani's followers to his tent, but still the girl fought and struggled for freedom.

Osmani's brow lowered, and turning to one of his satellites he said gruffly: "Go, bring her father!"

In a few moments Tinola's father, bruised, battered and blood-stained, was dragged forward from the crowd of captives.

Straightening himself, and folding his arms, the savage chieftain cast a defiant look upon his persecutors. But when his glance fell upon his daughter Tinola, he swayed from side to side and ground

his teeth. There was a dignity of mien about the wounded savage that attracted even the admiration of his heartless captors, for among them physical courage was esteemed the highest virtue.

In response to Osmani's brief command two of the Manyema raiders shouldered and aimed their guns at the chieftain's breast. The savage remained unmoved; he merely shrugged his shoulders and glanced scornfully at the guns.

Tinola's eyes distended with terror.

"Khalifan, tell this girl to look well upon her father! She chooses life or death for him. Another sound or struggle and that frowning savage yonder will be shot. Does she consent to behave with peace?"

After the negro had interpreted Osmani's speech the unhappy girl stifled a sob, then turned and cast a flashing glance upon the Arab chief, and bowed her head in sullen submission.

"Ha! The savage is tamed? Lead her to my tent, and take that ugly M'shenzi away." Then turning to the bystanders Osmani added, "Bassi. You can go."

As the night hours passed the scenes in the Arab's camp grew wilder. The victorious raiders gave themselves up to a drinking bout. The more sober of the party danced and sang until their bodies were bathed in perspiration, and they fell to the ground exhausted.

About midnight some of the revellers were startled by a stifled groan, which seemed to emanate from the direction of Osmani's tent, but, reassured by the subsequent silence, they said laughingly:

"Ha! Our master's pagan shows her teeth again." Merrily the dance and song continued, the deep bass voices of the singers blending with the incessant booming of the drums, filling the still night air with reverberations.

Muddled with potent palm-juice, careless and stupefied, the drunken raiders were too absorbed in their carousal to notice Tinola's lithe figure glide from beneath the canvas of Osmani's tent and disappear in the shadows.

The night grew far advanced and the singing and the dancing ceased. The log fires burned low, casting a lurid glow upon the forms of the raiders, who, overcome with drink, now lay sleeping in all manner of grotesque attitudes.

Deep black shadows enveloped the crowd of native captives, who were huddled together in the centre of the zereba. But they slept not.

The darkness increased. It was the hour before dawn. The wind rustled through the tree-tops in the forest, the heavy breathing of the sleepers became more sonorous and regular, and the frogs in the adjacent swamps croaked dismally at intervals. Occasionally one of the wood fires burst into fitful

flame, revealing the squatting form of a dozing sentinel. Then a shower of sparks would arise from another fire, where a half-burnt log had rolled aside.

A watchful sentinel glancing towards the forest would have seen the glittering of keen eyes. But the palm-juice had proved too potent. The Arab's sentries slept.

Dark figures led by the native girl Tinola climbed noiselessly over the stockade and swarmed like ants into a shady corner of the camp. If one of the sentries had but raised his head he would have seen the gleam of murderous knives and spears.

There was a silent movement among the captives. One by one they arose, freed from their bonds. They crouched like leopards, ready to spring upon their prey.

A shout, a rush of footsteps, and the Arab camp was doomed.

Dazed and surprised in their drunken slumbers, the Manyema staggered and fell before the revengeful natives. Deft and alert the natives swarmed upon them, hacking and hewing with their keen-edged weapons; until, panic-stricken, the surviving Manyema rushed towards Osmani's tent. There they found Khalifan with a flaming fire-brand. Holding the canvas aside, the negro entered. The light of his torch fell upon the lifeless body of their chief.

A sketch at Yambinga

Drawn by the Author

Osmani bin Seyf had been stabbed in the heart with his own dagger.

This discovery completed the disorder of the Manyema marauders, not one of whom lived to see the approaching dawn.

KARIB BWANA. Enter my house; and, n'shallah, I will tell you my story."

The speaker was my host, Faradji Ibn Suliman, one of the most notorious slave-raiders in Central Africa. I was among the Arab slave-hunters in the Great African forest at that time, travelling towards Tippo Tib's camp, and being familiar with the Kiswahili language spoken by the Arabs, I took a deep interest in obtaining personal information from them concerning their adventures.

From the first moment when I made the acquaintance of Suliman, I was impressed by his air of refinement. He was tall and distinguished-looking, and his face bore no indication whatever of his calling. He was gracious in his manner, and his whole personality suggested the courteous dignity of a bygone age. I noticed that he was generally alone, and that he spoke but little. There was a tinge of sadness about him, and he seemed out of his element hunting men in the African forest. He attracted me and I determined to try and break down his barrier of

reserve. I succeeded admirably, and we reached a degree of companionship. Thus it was that Suliman bade me enter the sacred precincts of his tembe and promised to relate to me something of the story of his life.

It was evening. Outside, the camp-followers had already stretched themselves before their log fires to sleep. We entered a large room lit by two oil lamps of ancient pattern. Upon a raised dais at one end of the room lay numerous mats and bolsters of gaudy colours. Silver-sheathed daggers and highly ornamented pistols hung upon the walls, and a faint and pleasant odour pervaded the air. In a corner of the chamber lay a number of enormous tusks of ivory piled into a heap, the proceeds of recent raids upon a neighbouring tribe of forest dwellers.

We seated ourselves, cross-legged, upon a large mat. A tall negro entered, bearing a slender-necked metal coffee-pot, from which he poured delicious coffee into two small cups. After a few moments when the negro had retired, Suliman commenced his narrative.

"Our custom is to begin a story at the beginning!

"I was born in Zanzibar. My father's name was Suliman; he was a pure-blooded Arab from Muscat in the Persian Gulf. My mother was a black slave woman whom he had captured near

Ujiji. When I was about seven years old, I remember that my father went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and he was away for a long time. When he returned, he wore a blue robe, and was called 'Hadji,' out of respect for his religious devotion in visiting the burial-place of God's only prophet the great Mohammed. My father then became a priest and accompanied Hamad Ibn Mohamad, who is now known as 'Tippo Tib,' the chief of the Arabs, upon a long journey into the interior of this great country you call Africa, in quest of ivory and slaves.

"Tippo Tib and his followers were great warriors, and they fought with all the different savage tribes who inhabited the countries through which they passed. My father however was not a fighting man; he was their head priest, by virtue of his pilgrimage to Mecca, and it was his duty to advise Tippo Tib as to which month was best in which to make his warlike attacks upon the natives—for you know some of us Mohammedans believe that certain months are more auspicious for fighting than others. During my father's absence in Africa I remained with my mother in Zanzibar, and was taught by an itinerant schoolmaster to read and write Arabic.

"I was about sixteen years old when my father returned with Tippo Tib to Zanzibar. He came back rich, for the journey, occupying about six years, had been a most profitable one. My father invested

his share of the profits which were derived from the slaves and ivory they had secured, in land. He purchased a large plantation, and lived a comfortable life overlooking his slaves who worked in his gardens of cinnamon and cloves. One day, about a year after my father's return, by the side of a stream which marked the boundary of my father's plantation, I caught sight of a beautiful girl. Her dark soft eyes were like the eyes of a dove, and she walked with the grace of a young gazelle. I followed her at a distance and later on discovered that she was the daughter of an old Indian money-lender, who lived on his cocoa-nut plantation, which adjoined the property of my father. I watched and waited day after day, and was at length rewarded by meeting the girl again. We talked together, and as days passed our clandestine meetings continued, and we fell in love with each other.

"From her father, the rich old Indian, I knew full well I had but little hope of gaining consent to our marriage; for notwithstanding my father's pure blood and his riches, I was the child of a negro slave-woman, and my caste was not therefore of a high enough order to satisfy the Indian's pride.

"While meditating upon the best means of securing my bride, I found to my horror that a rich young Arab, the son of one of the Sultan's magistrates, had

sought her hand, and the mercenary old Indian had agreed already to the marriage.

"Thus my chances assumed a doubtful aspect, and I fully realised that if I wished to make the half-caste Indian girl my wife, I must act speedily and energetically. I arranged a meeting-place, and in the meantime, hired a small dhow to convey us to an Arab town on the mainland coast, far away from Zanzibar, where I intended to live with my beautiful bride, in strict seclusion. Armed with a pistol and dagger, and accompanied by a slave, I proceeded one evening to our usual trysting-place, to meet my intended bride, and to lead her to the sea-shore, where my dhow was in readiness to convey us to our destination.

"It was late in the evening, dark, and all was perfectly silent save for the faint sounds in the distance of slaves singing after their day's work. Presently the leaves rustled, and the girl of my heart stood before me, frightened and trembling.

" 'Let us hasten, mine! I fear I am followed. My father suspects. Let us go away at once.'

"Although startled by her words and her evident state of alarm I could not resist the temptation of clasping her for one moment in my arms. As I held her trembling form, breathing soft words of love into her ear, I was startled by the blinding flash of a pistol-shot. Then after a moment's bewilderment

I found that I held only the corpse of the girl I loved! Her Arab lover had followed her to our meeting-place, and blinded with jealous rage, he had shot my loved one in my arms. Almost beside myself, I seized my dagger, sprang upon the young Arab, and stabbed him to the heart. The sound of his pistol-shot raised an alarm. I heard sounds of approaching men. Picking up the lifeless body of the girl I ran quickly towards the dhow and embarked.

"We sailed away from Zanzibar in the fresh evening breeze, and my grief was so great that I felt like a man without sense. At sunrise I directed the helmsman to steer for the shore. I landed in the breakers, with the cold lifeless figure of my loved one; and I buried her in a grave dug with my own hands. Tenderly I filled in the grave, all the time with a sobbing voice singing our burial song. I would have remained beside the grave, had not the crew of the dhow forced me on board again. The intensity of my love and sorrow had been so keen, that I was seized by an attack of fever which nearly killed me, but my faithful slave nursed me until I was strong again.

"Having killed the son of so influential a man as the magistrate of the Sultan of Zanzibar, it was impossible for me to return without running the risk of being beheaded, and so I waited until Tippo Tib

started upon another long journey into the interior, and after some trouble and delay I succeeded in joining him on the caravan path about one month's journey from Zanzibar. On account of my father's prestige and reputation, the great Arab leader made me one of his henchmen, and I was placed in command of a large detachment of his wild Manyema warriors.

"Very soon after I had joined Tippo Tib we were engaged in a severe fight with a powerful warlike tribe, called the Masai, and for many days a deadly conflict raged. But notwithstanding the excitement of this new life, with its daily dangers and scenes of bloodshed, I still suffered keenly from sorrow, and the form of the Indian girl was before my eyes day and night, in times of peace, and in the wildest scenes of warfare.

"At last after many moons' journey, we reached Tippo Tib's headquarters at Kizingiti, and as I still suffered from depression of spirits, I asked to be sent to a far-off country where alone I might in time recover from my grief. He agreed at once and a few days later I was provided with four hundred armed men, and instructed to proceed through the Great Forest in a straight line towards the setting sun, and to obtain as many slaves and tusks of ivory as I could in twenty-five months. I started, and day by day we had to fight our way amidst swarms

of 'Washenzi,' who filled the forests with their shouts and war-cries.

"One day, we were suddenly surprised by a warning shout from one of the party of men leading the way. Upon arriving on the scene I found several men with bleeding feet. Alongside of the narrow elephant paths which intersected the forest in all directions, we discovered that pointed sticks of hard wood had been so placed as to wound the feet of strangers.

" 'It is the work of the Watwa, the dwarfs,' said several of my men. 'We are in their country now. It will be well to get our guns ready.'

"Almost as soon as the words were uttered, there was a sound like falling rain, and a flight of small sharp-pointed wooden arrows fell among us. The next instant a volley was fired in all directions. When the sounds of the guns died away the air was filled with cries and groans. Rushing forward through the thick undergrowth, after taking the precaution to reload our rifles, we found several queer-looking little men apparently dead, and others lying wounded on the ground.

"At first, wounded as they were, the fiendish-looking imps endeavoured to shoot more poisoned arrows from their short bows, but finding that they were only laughed at, they dropped their weapons in fear and wonderment.

"Four of them had been shot dead, but the others, with a few exceptions, were slightly wounded; in most cases excessive fright at the sounds of the gunshots appeared to have been the cause of their remaining upon the ground, rather than the severity of their wounds. When the wounded dwarfs realised that we were disposed to be friendly, they grinned and motioned with their hands to a particular direction, evidently intending to indicate that it was there their villages were situated.

"Picking them up, my Manyema soldiers, who appeared giants by contrast, carried the wounded creatures along in their arms, followed by the remainder of the caravan, and marched in the direction indicated by the wounded dwarfs.

" We had not travelled far before we caught sight of smoke arising among the trees, and a few minutes later we found ourselves in the midst of a weird-looking deserted encampment.

"The wounded dwarfs were placed together beneath a large tree, and grinning again as they pointed to the deserted huts, they uttered a succession of peculiar calls, resembling the notes of birds. Their calls were answered in the same manner from the forest, and by degrees the village was literally filled by crowds of most uncouth little people.

"The village of the dwarfs was composed of irregular lines of grass huts built in the shape of bee-

hives, with small square apertures near the roof, which served as doors. The forest had been cleared all round the village, the larger trees having been cut at the height of twenty or thirty feet from the ground.

"The tall white, dead trunks, around which enormous limbs and logs were lying in wild confusion, rendered the approach to the village from the forest extremely difficult; and this stratagem was thereby utilised by the cunning dwarfs as an effective protection against the danger of sudden attack. The huts themselves were most primitive and crude in structure, there were no signs of pottery or other domestic utensils, and the whole aspect of the village suggested a temporary camping-place.

"The only covering worn by the dwarfs was a bunch of leaves suspended from a string tied round their waists. Several holes were pierced in the outer auricle of their ears, in which were fastened a number of small iron rings that jingled as they moved their heads.

"After considerable inquiry I at last found one of my native slaves understood a few words of the language spoken by the pigmies; but his knowledge of their tongue was so slight that it seemed impossible to obtain satisfactory answers to any of my questions. At length however an abnormally stout dwarf, who appeared to be a chieftain, stepped for-

ward, and to the surprise of the slave spoke to him in his own language. But even under these more favourable circumstances it was yet a difficult task to carry on any intelligible conversation, for the words of the dwarf had to be interpreted twice. We learnt however from the pigmy chief that the principal village of the tribe was situated a few miles further on, and that in their chief town were large stores of ivory. In the words of the chief 'there were more tusks than any man could count in four days.'

"Once more the caravan dived into the gloomy forest, and as we marched along, led by the uncanny-looking little chief, we were accompanied by an ever-increasing crowd of noisy chattering little fellows, who skipped and jumped about among the trees like monkeys.

"By the time we reached the high wooden palisade which was built entirely around this mysterious town, darkness was coming on and I was anxious to camp for the night outside the formidable-looking stockade; but against my will I at last gave way to the wishes of my people, who looked forward to a good supper and a merry night with the little savages, and entered the enclosure.

"We entered the village by a very narrow gateway, over which was suspended a perpendicular log. Owing to the small size of the entrance, my follow-

ers were obliged to squeeze themselves through in single file. When we reached the enclosure we gazed in wonder upon the scene. Before us, as far as we could see in the gloomy light of the fast approaching evening, was gathered a crowd consisting of many hundreds of dwarfs, all yelling and shouting with excitement. Dotted all over the extensive enclosure were a number of little round huts. Log fires were burning in front of most of the huts, emitting a faint and sickly odour.

"The scene was indescribably weird and confusing and before we had quite recovered from our bewilderment at being in the midst of so many quaint little people, we were conducted to a corner of the village, where we were invited to camp for the night. Dazed though I was, I yet noticed piles of large elephant tusks outside several of the huts.

"By the time my people had deposited their load of utensils, ammunition and elephant tusks in a heap, it was quite dark, the only light being from the flickering wood fires. Crowding densely round us, as we prepared to make ourselves comfortable for the night, stood the curious peering dwarfs, shouting, quarrelling, and elbowing one another in order to obtain a view of our proceedings.

"When all was arranged in order the little savage chief who had conducted us to this village suddenly appeared, followed by about fifty of his followers,

all bearing large gourds of fermented palm-juice. This inebriating drink was presented, together with a quantity of dried antelope meat, by the pigmy chief with a quaint dignity, and in a short time a condition of good-humour existed between us.

"Towards midnight the dwarfs gradually retired to their own huts, and in about half an hour the entire village was quiet and apparently peaceful. Overcome by the fumes of the palm wine, which was an unaccustomed luxury, my followers, both native slaves and Manyema soldiers, fell into a deep slumber. The fires burnt low, and even I, generally so watchful, did not detect any sound of footsteps. Once, however, we were partially awakened by a creaking sound which appeared to come from the direction of the narrow gateway, but after listening for a few moments and hearing nothing alarming, we settled down again to sleep.

"'Ma-ma!' suddenly shouted one of my Manyemas. This cry, followed by a hideous piercing shriek, suddenly aroused us. We sprang to our feet and seized our guns.

"The night was very dark, all the village fires having been extinguished. Dazed and bewildered, we stood for a moment seemingly ignorant of where we were.

"With fiendish yells, that for an instant chilled our blood, we were charged by hundreds of blood-

thirsty pigmy savages, who rushed frantically upon us with keen-edged knives and spears. My followers fired wildly at first, but realising their desperate position—for we were virtually prisoners in the pigmy camp—they became steadier, and every man struggled manfully against the ferocious attacks of our devilish enemies who fought until they dropped, riddled with our iron slugs and bullets.

"For upwards of three hours the fight continued with unabated fury. The dense darkness was lit up by the flashing of our guns, as they poured forth bullet after bullet into the frantic crowd. The cries of each fresh attacking party mingled with, and sometimes drowned, the hideous groans and shrieks of the wounded.

"Gradually there dawned the cold gray light of approaching day, and as the darkness disappeared, the dwarfs retired out of the village enclosure into the forest, leaving behind them a heap of wounded and slain lying in a semicircle around the corner of the palisade where my followers had fought with the desperation of despair. Just as it grew light enough to distinguish our ghastly surroundings, there arose from the forest one shrill cry uttered simultaneously by hundreds of hoarse throats, and the next minute the undaunted dwarfs came swarming over the tall palisade on every side, like ants crawling in myriads over a log.

"Volley after volley was fired, and the howling pigmies fell in all directions. Spears and arrows fell in showers among my poor slaves and Manyemas. Still on the dwarfs came in their hundreds, until with one loud cry of despair my Manyema soldiers and the panic-stricken slaves turned, and with a mighty rush beat down the palisade and fled in wild confusion to the shelter of the forest. In an instant the dwarfs were upon us, and many of my slaves were smitten by keen-bladed spears and poisoned arrows.

"Very soon after we had quitted the stockaded village the dwarfs relinquished their attacks in order to secure our loads of ammunition and ivory which we had been forced to abandon. Taking advantage of this momentary respite, I succeeded in gathering my men together on the top of a small wooded hill. Here we made our last stand.

"It was not long before the dwarfs continued their attacks, but from our elevation my Manyemas were able to drive them back with better success than when in the village, where they had been hemmed in by the palisade. Instead of the dwarfs showing signs of giving in after the death of so many of their number, they only became more warlike and their numbers were augmented from time to time by a fresh supply of little warriors from the forest.

"During the whole day my Manyema soldiers fought bravely, but when the sun set they commenced to grow uneasy, for their ammunition was nearly finished. It was just dark when the pigmies made their strongest and final attack upon the hill.

"My Manyemas wavered, turned, and fled. They rushed helter-skelter into the forest, followed by their fiendish little enemies.

"After a moment's hesitation, I and three of my chiefs, who had remained beside me throughout, took advantage of the moment when the dwarfs were rushing after my retreating Manyemas, and fled into the forest in an opposite direction.

"I cannot now tell you of the sufferings my companions and I endured after our escape. We were lost in the forest. We had no food. We crawled each day through the woods towards the east. We slept in the branches of the trees to escape from the leopards. We lived on roots. I reached the great river at last and found an Arab camp. Of all my expedition, which numbered about five hundred men, three of us were the only survivors. But this all happened many years ago, when I was young. Since then I've been successful. I now own as many slaves as the great Tippo Tib himself. Yet in my present prosperity, even after so many years of adventurous life, I can never forget my grief. In the

stillness of the night, here in the Great Forest, I dream of my youth.

"Yes, it is late. Good night!"

I arose and left my Arab host telling the beads of his rosary.

THE TALE OF A TUSK OF IVORY

THERE was an unusual commotion in the populous village of Yabuli, situated on the banks of the Aruwimi River, which flows into the Congo about fifteen hundred miles from the Atlantic coast. As a rule the villages in these districts were always in a more or less disturbed condition owing to the wild, unrestrained savagery of the inhabitants; but upon this particular occasion the angry voices of the men and the plaintive wailing of the women betokened a domestic affliction which appealed to young and old alike. Their plantations had been destroyed during the night by a herd of elephants. Such a heavy rain had fallen, that even the old women, whose vigilance is proverbial, had neglected their watchful duties, and all with one accord had thought of nothing else but gaining shelter in their grass-roofed huts from the inclement weather.

As is so frequently the case in these tropical latitudes the night's rain was followed by a radiant sunrise and there was not a semblance of a cloud in the clear blue sky.

Nature seemed all smiling and bright, and the foliage was refreshed after the rain, numbers of brilliantly plumed little sunbirds flew from the dark dripping forests to the trees in the open village streets, where they flitted from bough to bough and plumed themselves, and beautiful butterflies soared silently and gracefully over the village in the early morning sunshine.

The village scene presented a striking contrast to the beauties of nature around it, for the huts were sodden and bowed down by the weight of the wet grass roofs. There were large puddles of dirty water in the paths, littered here and there with palm-fronds, sticks, and grass-stalks, which had been blown, during the storm, from the dilapidated huts.

In the midst of an angry throng of naked savages, who were all talking at once in excited tones, sat one of the village headmen. He was a powerfully built man, and his countenance bore the impress of every form of brutal indulgence, and indicated plainly an unrestrained and evil disposition. His arms and legs were ornamented with highly polished iron and copper rings; around his neck he wore a string of human teeth. His name was Ioko, and his position as headman had been gained by his individual prowess and by his domineering character.

He sat upon a small carved stool, listening for some time to the uproar, until losing patience he

arose and with a wave of his arm commanded comparative silence.

"You men of Yabuli! Listen! Last night in the darkness the elephants robbed us of our food. Two moons ago we were treated in the same way by hippopotami who not only trampled our cassava and sugar-cane, but ate the roots. This is an unhappy time for us, for not only are our gardens ruined, but our goats and fowls, our only live stock, are always being stolen by leopards. Men of Yabuli, the evil spirit is at work against us."

For several minutes a general hubbub followed, until interrupted by a shrill female voice from a group of huts, some distance off.

"I know why the elephants came to us last night. You remember that old monster elephant with big ears and only one tusk, the one we all call Litoi Linene—it was he that led the others to the plantation, for the evil spirit is in his heart, and it has been there ever since Ioko tried to spear him in the forest. We shall never enjoy quietness until Litoi Linene is killed."

Several voices shouted in favour of this last speech, and after about an hour's excited talk it was agreed that several traps should be arranged forthwith, in order if possible to put an end to the evil-spirited elephant Litoi Linene, who was credited with having worked so much ill to the tribe.

Soon after this village conclave most of the men started off in different directions far into the forest, which surrounded the village, to set snares with keen-bladed spears which they firmly fastened in heavy spars of wood and deftly suspended from branches overhead by an ingenious arrangement of small creepers, so that when an unsuspecting elephant wandered beneath and unwittingly broke the light creepers which held the trap in its place, the weighted spear would fall and inflict a wound in the back or shoulder, a wound that often proved fatal.

All the main portion of the tribe were busy at this task until the sun went down, arranging the elephant snares in all the most likely places in the forest. The women were also absent, endeavouring to repair their damaged plantations. The village was deserted until sunset, when all returned to eat their evening meal of boiled cassava and plantains, after which they soon settled down to sleep.

The night was very dark, and there was every evidence of the near approach of another storm of wind and rain equal to that of the previous night. The only persons who were not comfortably sleeping in their grass huts were two or three women who were sitting with crying babies in their arms outside their doors in front of the log-fires upon which their supper had been cooked. Soon even

they retired for the night and gusts of wind blew sparks from the fires that were burning low.

Sometimes a gaunt and bony pariah dog sneaked from one fire to another in a vain search for food, but before very long they were overcome with sleep and curled themselves up in the hot ashes of the fires. In the depths of the forest the only sounds were the hoarse croakings of frogs and the occasional flutterings of horn-bills and other large birds roosting in the tree-tops. As the night advanced and the darkness became more dense the air grew hot and heavy, and fierce gusts of wind whistled through the branches overhead, snapping off dead twigs.

Far away in the forest there stood the huge form of an old bull elephant, one of whose tusks had been damaged in his youth and had become totally decayed. His head was bent forward in order to rest his one monster tusk upon the ground; his trunk loosely coiled between his fore-legs was also resting on the ground, and his great ragged ears were flapping spasmodically in vain endeavours to shake off the myriads of mosquitoes that persistently hovered around his head.

Suddenly the forest was lit up by a most vivid flash of lightning followed an instant afterward by a crashing peal of thunder. The elephant raised his head with a startled jerk, his huge limbs shaking with fear.

Almost before the rumbling echoes of the thunder had died away the rain that had been threatening for so many hours fell in torrents. Flashes of lightning succeeded each other so rapidly that the attendant peals of thunder were converted into one continuous roar, and the violence of the wind soon increased to a veritable tornado—a tropical hurricane.

Trees were blown down and uprooted on all sides of the terrified elephant, who remained some time motionless from fear, but as the tempest continued the monster became suddenly panic-stricken and charged madly through the dense forest, stumbling and falling over the trunks of uprooted trees in his endeavours to gain some open patch where there would be no danger of being crushed by the falling timber.

The lurid flashes of lightning revealed the frightened animal with coiled trunk and head bent low, blindly smashing a way through dense woods.

Suddenly, in the midst of a mad rush, the elephant fell to the ground with a sharp squeal of pain. The poor brute had severed the vines that supported one of the traps that had been arranged the previous day, and a heavily-weighted spear plunged between his shoulders. For some moments the wounded animal remained motionless; then the great body rolled slowly from side to side in vain en-

Village scene, Aruimi

Photograph taken by the Author

deavour to free himself from the spear, but the weapon was barbed and the points had penetrated too deeply to be shaken off.

After many efforts the animal at last got on his legs again and staggered a short distance through the forest until, growing rapidly weaker from loss of blood, he stopped to rest and leaned the weight of his body against a tree, breathing heavily in agony. Here he remained, exhausted, until daybreak, his hide covered with patches of mud and deep red smears of blood. Gradually the rain ceased and the wind died away. With the first glimpse of dawn in the village there was creaking from the small square cane doors of the huts; as they were removed one by one, dark, manly figures, with long spears in their hands, stepped forth and stretched themselves after their night's heavy sleep.

Hastily arranging their scanty loin-cloths of beaten bark, the men started into the dark woods, in different directions, to examine their traps.

The party entered the forest in single file but soon divided into small companies. Ioko took an entirely different route from the others, and when about two miles from the village he halted suddenly, snapped his fingers, and placed his hand over his open mouth, saying to himself in a low tone:

"Look at this elephant track! What a path is here!" He followed the trail for some time, until

within view of the trap he had set the previous day, when his excitement became intense, for he found the spear was gone, and the grass and leaves beneath the snare were covered with blood. He followed the blood-stained tracks until he approached a great ant-hill, near which he stopped a moment to extract a thorn from his foot. He was startled by a deep groan, and cautiously stepping forward, he saw his prey leaning its unwieldy form against the mound.

"Lo-o-o! It is the evil one, Litoi Linene!" (Big Ears), gasped Ioko to himself excitedly.

Carefully watching the animal, to decide in his own mind upon the best mode of spearing him in a vital part, he firmly gripped his heavy spear, the haft of which was fully eight feet long, and stepped softly forward until within reach of the left shoulder of the unconscious animal. With steady nerve he poised his weapon; then with a mighty plunge he drove the keen-bladed spear deep into the elephant's heart, and sprang away among the trees. With a shrill trumpeting cry of pain Litoi Linene staggered to his feet, swayed forward, quivered, and fell to the ground lifeless.

Ioko, after waiting a few moments to satisfy himself that the animal was dead, raised a cry that echoed through the woods, and which soon brought several of his companions to the spot. Without

any further sign of excitement he quietly busied himself in cutting his barbed spear from the carcase. He then examined the one large tusk and the decayed stump of its fellow, remarking to his companions who were now arriving:

"Now the evil spirit is dead; Litoi Linene will lead no more devilish elephants to our plantations."

In a very short time the scene became indescribable. Excited men with sharp knives commenced cutting lumps of meat from the still warm carcase and throwing them to the eager women and children, who crowded around with baskets, quarrelling like wild animals over the possession of each piece of flesh that was thrown among them. The savages' hearts were filled with joy at the prospect of a huge feast.

That night, under cover of the darkness, Ioko, all alone, buried the one heavy tusk of Litoi Linene in a swamp far from the village, so that only he himself knew of the place of concealment. He hid the tusk according to the tribal custom, for in the Aruwimi districts the people of neighbouring villages are seldom good friends, and they all have a habit of attacking each other at odd times in order to capture men, women and children for cannibal purposes. As tusks of ivory have an acknowledged value, equal to that of a human being, it is customary for the members of each village to conceal in the

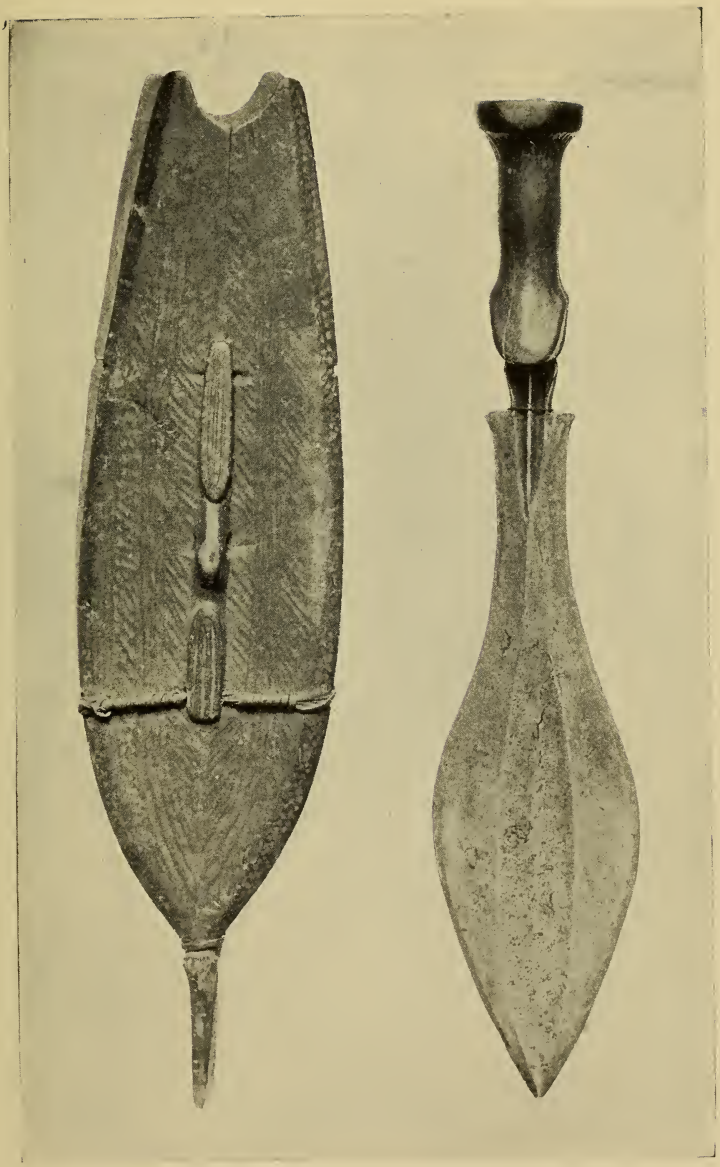
forests as many tusks as they can obtain, so that they may be in a position to redeem, if permitted, any of their companions who may be unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of their hostile neighbours.

For five years the tusk lay hidden beneath the foul mud and long grass in the dismal swamp. No human foot ever ventured into the treacherous quagmire, and only at rare intervals small parties of natives, darting among the forest trees in search of wild honey, or in an exciting chase of bushbuck, broke the silence.

In the oppressive heat at midday a solitary buffalo, in search of a cool bath, would sometimes flounder in the mud; or a small herd of elephants, strolling idly through the forest in single file, led by the father of the party, an irritable old bull elephant, would occasionally wade clumsily through the deepest part, splashing the black mud over each other and flapping their great ears to drive away the swarms of flies that hovered around their heads.

A dense, white, miasmatic fog enveloped the swamp every evening after sunset, and hung over the tall reeds like a silken canopy until long after sunrise.

During the five years that the tusk lay hidden in the swamp, but little change had taken place in



Native fighting knife and sheath, Manyema

In the collection of the Author

the village of Yabuli. The direction of the paths had been somewhat altered, as many of the huts had been rebuilt; for being composed of light materials such as fine grass and leaves, with the lighter framework of cornstalks, they soon became rotten, and it is necessary to repair them after every rainy season and to rebuild the huts every few years.

It happened one day that the occupants of a fishing canoe returned to Yabuli in a great state of excitement. They had been down the river fishing near the village of Basoko, which is situated at the confluence of the Aruwimi and the Congo, and they had heard wonderful accounts of a fight that had taken place a few days before, between the fierce men of Basoko and a party of strangers who were drifting down the Congo River in war-canoes. The story of this remarkable adventure had been greatly embellished, according to African custom, by the friendly Basoko who related it to the Yabuli fishermen, and they in their turn quite naturally rendered the recital still more grotesque, when they repeated it to the crowd of eager listeners who thronged the river bank, attracted by the fishermen's cries:

"Uku uku-u, uku-uku-u, u-u!" (Come! come! come!)

"The chief of the strangers was covered with cloth, and his face was white, and it shone like sunlight on the river," said they.

"Ekh! what strange things," the crowd exclaimed.

"The stranger chief had only one eye."

"Lo-o-o!"

"It was in the middle of his forehead."

"A-yah! a-yah!" roared the crowd, clapping their hands. "When the Basoko went out on the river in their war-canoes to fight and capture the strangers, they cried, 'Meat! meat!' for they intended eating their bodies, but they were not to be captured, and they killed many of the Basoko with sticks, which sent forth thunder and lightning. They spoke words in a strange tongue. They wore red cloth, and blue cloth, and their heads were covered with white cloth. They have drifted on down the river and passed the strong Basoko with jeers."

At the end of each of the fishermen's sentences the crowd uttered exclamations of wonder. The old women, always superstitious, raised their voices and said that the evil spirit was at the bottom of it all, and that a day of trouble was coming to all the country. Whole days were spent in excited talk about the strangers, for never in their recollection had they heard of such people before.

Now this man, this chief of the strangers, whose white face they said shone like "sunlight on the river," was none other than Stanley, with his gallant little band of Zanzibar men. At the time of his passing Basoko, he had spent upward of two years

travelling in Central Africa, engaged in solving the great geographical problems which had hitherto puzzled the world, and to which the brave-hearted Livingstone had devoted so many years of his valuable life, dying in harness when upon the threshold of success.

At this time there was established at Nyangwe, the advance post of the Arab slave-raiders from the East Coast, under the leadership of the famous Tippo Tib, who soon after Stanley's departure down the Congo, persuaded his companions to set out on the same journey. They recruited a large number of fighting men from different parts of the Manyema country, and fought their way down the river as far as the Kizingiti cataract, where Tippo Tib established himself as chief of the Arabs. Large bands of these Manyema were despatched from Stanley Falls in different directions, after the fashion of blood-hounds, to obtain tusks of ivory from the natives by whatever means they chose.

As a rule each of these parties was divided into sections, different Arabs contributing ten or twenty armed men, each with one man of higher caste elected as leader. Tippo Tib usually contributed the largest number of men and appointed the leader himself. After an absence of many months, when one of the companies returned to headquarters with slaves and ivory, the booty was divided among the

Arabs according to the number of men contributed by each. The ivory was sent up-river to Nyangwe in canoes, and thence it was carried overland to the East Coast by large slave caravans, the journey occupying between six months and a year.

During all these eventful days in the history of Central Africa, Litoi Linene's tusk lay unheeded in the swamp. With the new generation, all recollection of the elephant Litoi Linene had died away, and his massive bones had long since disappeared in the high grass and brushwood that had rapidly grown up from the soil that his carcase had enriched. Even the existence of his tusk, the only substantial relic of his former greatness, had almost been forgotten by everybody except Ioko.

While the chief topic of conversation with the large majority of the villagers was still about the strange white man's journey past the dreaded Basoko, yet a few men, including Ioko, often spoke of the evil elephant. Although since its death several elephants had been killed by means of spear-snares and pitfalls cunningly concealed with light brushwood, yet no one had ever obtained such a large tusk of ivory from any of the other elephants as from Litoi Linene, and another reason for attaching such importance to the death of this animal was the belief that Ioko had exterminated the power to effect evil that Litoi Linene had been credited with possessing. Since his death

their plantations had been comparatively undisturbed by big game, and this fact alone went far to encourage the belief that they had disposed of an evil spirit.

Soon after Tippo Tib's occupation of Stanley Falls in 1879, rumours reached Yabuli and the neighbouring villages of oppression and persecution by the Manyema. Chiefs met together to inquire of each other the reason of this invasion. Less than three years after Stanley's fight with the Basoko at the mouth of the Aruwimi, the Manyema mercenaries of the Arabs attacked and destroyed several villages higher up the same river, having travelled overland from the Congo through the forests and descended the Aruwimi River in canoes. They laid waste all the villages by the way, capturing men and women and imposing fines of ivory for their redemption upon those of the natives who were fortunate enough to escape to the woods. Although every precaution was taken by the people of Yabuli to guard against surprise, they instinctively felt impending evil and a gloom settled over the village affecting old and young alike. They all appeared to realise their isolated position, escape being impossible as their neighbours were at enmity with them and with each other, and the poor wretches lived in a condition of fear bordering upon panic.

At last the evil day arrived. Early one morning, just before daybreak, they were suddenly startled by

the loud reports of the Manyema guns. The forest around the village appeared alive with armed men, who rushed among their dwellings from all sides, firing recklessly, sometimes in the air, into the doors of the huts, and at the panic-stricken savages, who rushed toward the woods for shelter. A few of the braver natives stood their ground, and hurled spears and knives at their opponents, but one by one they dropped, shot by their brutal enemies. After firing their muzzle-loading muskets, many of the Manyema rushed upon the natives and clubbed them with the butt-ends. The women encumbered with their children, whom they were bravely trying to carry off to the shelter of the woods, were soon overtaken by the Manyema, who roughly threw them to the ground and bound their arms and legs. Nearly two-thirds of the women and children were captured, including the favourite wife of Ioko; but many of the men and a few women reached the woods. Ioko, although wounded by a slug of copper from a Manyema musket, had also escaped.

During the day the fugitives in the forest gradually congregated together, and by nightfall they had formed a few rough huts with light brushwood and broad leaves, which, when fastened together in rows by the stalks, each row overlapping the other, formed a sufficient shelter from the rain. This primitive encampment in the forest was a considerable distance

from their former village, now completely in the possession of the Manyema.

The leader of the Arab buccaneers, Muini Khamici, had taken up his quarters in the largest hut in the village, which happened to be the property of poor Ioko. A rough stockade of brushwood was placed around the huts, in order to guard against all danger of a sudden night attack.

The bodies of the slain had been thrown into the river, and the captured women, naked, and trembling with fear, many of them with their arms tied behind them, were grouped together and placed in charge of Manyema headmen. Others of the marauding band proceeded from hut to hut collecting the trifles of domestic furniture used by the natives, consisting chiefly of small wooden stools, mats, cooking-pots, and ivory pestles used for pounding cassava.

A few days after the Manyema had attacked Yabuli, they released two of the captive women to convey a message to the fugitives in the forest. These women were selected as being of little value, for they were old and feeble. Women are very lightly esteemed by the natives and are mere slaves, whose only duty is to bear children, cultivate the soil, and prepare food for their masters.

"Go to your men, who have sought refuge in the forest," said Muini Khamici, the bandit leader. "Tell them their women are alive, and that we will

set them free when they bring us the tusks of ivory that they have hidden in the woods; we will surrender a woman for each tusk. If they do not come to us with ivory on the fifth day from now, we shall take the women to another country and sell them to people who will kill and eat them. Kwenda!"

When the two poor old women fully realised they were free, they darted into the woods, one after the other, displaying wonderful agility in picking their way through the dense undergrowth, and they finally halted, breathless, and trembling with excitement.

"Oh, ma-ma—ma-ma-a-a!" they cried in a wailing monotone as they cowered on the ground, until, recovering strength and courage, they resumed their way, now calling loudly, now listening for a response from their friends, who were camped in the forest. At last, hearing an answer in the distance to their echoing calls, they started off in that direction, and were soon in the midst of an eager crowd. It was a pitiful picture, the meeting of these poor women with the fugitives, who were all excited, and fearful of every sound in the woods around them.

The women were too bewildered at first to answer all their questions, but they finally managed to explain their message; the men in anger snapped their fingers and ground their teeth. Ioko sat apart from his noisy companions, in moody silence, for his favourite wife, Kaolenge (the Strong One), with her

baby, had been captured by the Manyema, and his heart ached. The African savage is apparently incapable of any constant affection, but occasionally he does possess a tender, though rugged regard for a favourite wife. Ioko had almost given up hope of recovering his Strong One; but now that he knew by what means he could redeem her, his spirits revived, and he determined to offer the Manyema his most valuable possession, the tusk of Litoi Linene.

In the dead of night, with a fire-brand to light him through the forest, Ioko wended his way to the swamp where the tusk had been so long buried. He continued prodding the soft mud with his spear, until striking a hard substance, he discovered the object of his search; and with considerable labour he succeeded in unearthing his buried treasure. Lifting the burden upon his powerful shoulders, and picking up his spear and fire-brand, which he blew into a glow, he returned to the camp and lay for the remainder of the night with the tusk beside him, his heart beating fast with excitement at the prospect of dealing with the treacherous Manyema on the morrow.

At the first ray of dawn he wakened his companions to tell them of his intention of testing the truth of the Manyema's message by offering the tusk of Litoi Linene in exchange for his wife and child; and they all agreed, if Ioko's undertaking proved successful,

they would unearth their hidden tusks to redeem their own women and children. When Ioko drew near the Manyema stockade, his companions, who had followed to see the result of his errand, hid themselves behind the trees at the edge of the forest. It was daylight by this time and the Manyema were moving about among the huts.

"Naonga!" ("I say") called Ioko from the woods. "Is it true that our women are alive?"

"It is indeed true," replied Muini Khamici, who was well enough acquainted with the Aruwimi dialects.

Ioko called again from the woods: "I bring an elephant's tusk for Kaolenge and her child; but first let me hear her voice, that I may know you speak truly."

After a short consultation a woman's voice called from the village:

"I am Kaolenge. Oh Ioko, I am your Kaolenge."

Ioko then stepped boldly forward, and laying the tusk upon the ground, he retreated again behind the trees. Several of the Manyema pointed their guns to the forest to protect themselves from any treachery on the part of the natives, whilst others rushed for the tusk, which they carried to Muini Khamici, who stood by the entrance to the stockade.

Orders were then given to free Kaolenge, and when the bonds were cut from the poor woman's

arms, she caught up her baby and fled like a deer to the forest, crying piteously. Ioko seized her by the wrist and led her further into the forest, when she fell cowering upon the ground at his feet, sobbing deeply, as she clasped her baby tightly to her breast.

During the next few days, many other women were ransomed by their masters, and when there was no longer any prospect of obtaining more ivory from Yabuli, Muini Khamici and his gang evacuated the village, taking with them the remaining slaves—men, women, and children. They were now bound for Kizingiti, having obtained the amount of ivory expected of them by the Arabs.

Crossing the Aruwimi River in native canoes, the caravan, which now numbered about three hundred people, two-thirds of whom were slaves, started on an overland march to the Congo River, which was reached at a place called Yangambi. This journey occupied five days, and the forests through which they traversed were dark and gloomy, the undergrowth being so thick in some places that they frequently had to follow the beds of small streams and elephant paths whenever they found them leading in a south-easterly direction.

The tusk of Litoi Linene, being too heavy for one man to carry, was lashed to a pole and borne by two slaves. The captive women carried the lighter tusks and a large collection of native utensils, consisting

principally of small wooden stools, ivory pestles, cooking-pots and grass mats, all of which were the recognised perquisites of the Manyema, who themselves carried only their guns and ammunition, and acted as guards to the caravan, while their wives, who were also from the Manyema country, carried fowls, baskets of maize, long stalks of sugar-cane, and other provisions, all stolen from the native villages.

When they reached Yangambi the whole company embarked in native canoes and were paddled up the river, four days' journey, by friendly natives. At Kizingiti the slaves were distributed among certain Arabs' plantations, and the ivory was piled up in a hut where Tippo Tib divided the spoil between the Arabs who had a share in the expedition. Tippo Tib selected his own share with his customary shrewdness, and included the tusk of Litoi Linene, which he presented to a favourite wife of his harem, who concealed it in one of the dark rooms of his tembe, where for nearly six years it lay, covered with mats and rubbish, and was apparently forgotten.

As time passed, Tippo Tib discarded his once favourite wife, and Litoi Linene's tusk was confiscated and was among the first that were sold to a white trader, and soon it was stowed away with the others in the hold of the little river steamer which travelled down the Congo to Stanley Pool, past the riverside villages of thousands of savages, stopping each even-

ing at sunset, alongside the forest bank, where, by the flickering light of camp fires, the crew of the steamer cut dry wood into short lengths to provide fuel for the engine's furnace, and all night long merry songs of men and sounds of axes echoed through the dark, silent forest.

After sixteen days' journey down the Congo, the little steamer dropped anchor, and the tusks of ivory that had been all that time stowed in the dark hold were taken ashore and placed under guard in a rude structure that served for a store-house; for up to that time European traders had not been able to erect any permanent buildings, for want of the necessary materials. The ivory did not remain here long, for as soon as the natives could be engaged to carry it down country, the tusks were brought out, marked, and placed in a row. At a given signal the carriers, who had been keenly watching these proceedings, rushed wildly forward in order to select the lighter tusks, and soon all were appropriated, except the tusk of Litoi Linene, which no one volunteered to carry on account of its weight. The trader tried in vain to persuade different men to take it, but they emphatically shook their open hands and one man said:

"Ve, ve, yae mzito bene mundili, kulenda kwami ko, sea mona mpassi nyingi kuna ngila." [No, no, it is very heavy, white man; I cannot carry it, I should see too much trouble on the path.]

Eventually it was arranged that this tusk should be lashed on a pole and carried by two men, each being paid the same amount of cotton cloth as if carrying a full load. The caravan consisted of fifty men and boys, all belonging to the Bakongo tribe, under a headman or Kapita.

From Stanley Pool the series of cataracts, which extend a distance of two hundred miles to Matadi, render it necessary to transport merchandise, ivory, and all other loads, overland, and small companies were recruited from different parts of the Lower Congo country, under a responsible headman, to carry the burdens on their heads and shoulders. This journey was divided into two stages of a hundred miles each, and a transfer was made at Manyanga, as the people above and below this place are not always on good terms with each other, although they are apparently of the same tribe and speak the same language.

The first stage of this overland journey from Stanley Pool to Manyanga occupied six days, and the little caravan wended its way up and down hills, which afforded beautiful views of the distant country and the mighty Congo surging and eddying between its precipitous banks. But scenic magnificence is unnoticed and unappreciated by the Bakongo carrier, whose sensual tastes are more influenced by a gaudy-coloured cloth, or a feast of elephant beef.

Native fighting knife and sheath, Rua

In the collection of the Author

At Manyanga the ivory was transferred to another caravan, which journeyed seven days over steep hills, through deep swamps, and across numerous small rivers, until Matadi was reached. The ivory was then placed on board a river steamer, which conveyed it in two days to Banana, the trading depot at the mouth of the Congo. Here Litoi Linene's tusk was stored away with hundreds of others that had previously been sent down from the far interior, until the arrival of an ocean steamer, which conveyed the whole accumulation to Liverpool, where it was shortly afterwards sold by auction.

Litoi Linene's tusk, which had passed through so many strange phases, was now consigned to an ivory carver and turner, who ingeniously converted its hard substance into billiard balls, paper-knives, and various articles for the toilet table. And when the turner's work was finished, the little mound of ivory dust beneath his lathe was all that remained there of the tusk of the evil-spirited elephant Litoi Linene.

STORIES ABOUT ANIMALS

I ONCE by mischance shot a cow elephant. The elephant emerged suddenly from long grass at the edge of a wood. After it had fallen dead, its little young one suddenly appeared. It could not have been more than a few weeks old. I was accompanied by two Houssas, men of great size and strength, and we three ran forward to catch the little fellow.

The Houssas each grabbed a leg, and seated themselves upon the ground. I took hold of an ear.

The dear little animal stood quite quietly for some time, and then, apparently resenting this interference with his freedom, he shook his head, throwing me on my back, cast off the two Houssas, and trotting away to the bush he soon disappeared from sight.

* * * * *

A native coming to me at dawn, told me that he knew of the whereabouts of elephants. He led the way. After travelling several times the distance he had previously indicated, I expostulated with him for lying, and refused to go further. It was the early part of the afternoon. He replied:

"Oh, you had better come on now! It is further for you to go back to your camp than it is to go to where the elephants actually are."

* * * * *

Near Wamba I shot a solitary rogue elephant without tusks. He was standing at the edge of a forest. I fired three times at his head before he fell, and as he recovered from my second shot he came towards me tearing up a small tree on his way, enveloping himself in dust. He was charging when my third shot took effect.

The natives were soon attracted by the reports of my rifle, and were highly elated at the prospect of a banquet upon the elephant's remains. My disappointment at obtaining no ivory must have been apparent to the old native chief, for he said in his soft musical language:

"I suppose the white man looks sad, because the elephant had no valuable ivory. But he need not be sad, for see what happiness is ours! See what a quantity of meat there is for us!"

* * * * *

Going after elephants in a valley which was very much overgrown with high grass, I conceived the idea of sitting on the shoulders of a native follower, a man of giant stature.

The plan succeeded admirably and we approached

stealthily almost within gunshot of a fine bull elephant standing dozing, apart from the herd.

Just as I raised my gun to fire, my support vanished from beneath me and I was plunged into the thick black mire. It took some little time to recover myself and to obtain explanations, but I eventually found that my carrier had almost stepped upon a python, whose head, he said, was raised level with his eyes.

* * * * *

A somewhat similar experience occurred to me in stalking buffaloes in high grass. I heard a hissing sound which I took to be the snorting of a buffalo. With my gun I parted the grass in front of me as far as I could reach. To my horror I suddenly caught sight of the head of a python, swaying gently backwards and forwards.

For a brief second, fascination held me motionless. Then I dropped my gun and ran.

* * * * *

By my faulty aim I once wounded an elephant. Starting at dawn, I followed its track all day. The country was very rough, and taxed my endurance to the utmost. About sundown, when I came up with the wounded elephant, in a little belt of wood, I had barely strength enough to fire a last shot. After it had fallen dead I clambered on the carcase, and

vomited from sheer exhaustion. I passed the entire night lying on the body. It rained heavily.

* * * * *

It is no uncommon thing for hitherto populous districts to be deserted on account of the marauding of elephants, and the depredations they caused in the native plantations. Elephants frequently swim across the Congo. The whole of the body is submerged, their trunks and the top of their heads alone being above water.

* * * * *

The natives remarked about the elephants and buffaloes, that although they are found frequently together, there is always a certain amount of ill-feeling existing between them, and the natives ascribe it as being due to the elephants' cleanly habits, and their resentment of the buffaloes' carelessness. Elephants frequently cover their dung with a leafy bough.

* * * * *

It is extraordinary to notice the way in which both elephants and buffaloes will help the wounded one of a herd to escape, even though the beast may be very badly injured.

Elephants are gregarious. For food they are especially fond of the succulent branches and young twigs of certain trees and fruits, and tender bark.

The elephant seldom lies down. He sleeps on his four legs, leaning his body against a rock or tree or

ant-hill, and resting the points of his tusks upon the ground in front of him.

The elephant's trunk is in the first place an organ of smell. Secondly it enables the animal to quench its thirst in the shallowest waters and to reach the twigs upon which it feeds, and thirdly it possesses a wonderful sense of touch.

The meat of elephants is very highly thought of by the natives, but my experience certainly gave me the impression that no portion of the animal was fit for food in any form whatever, however long a time was spent in cooking it. The flesh of the young hippopotamus however is delicious—or it appeared so to us in Africa. In flavour it resembled a blend between pork and beef.

* * * * *

By the evidence of coins the African elephant is proved to have been utilised by man in the days of the Carthaginians. Since that time the art of taming the African elephant has been lost. The fact that the African elephant is not now tamed and reduced to the service of man, as is the Asiatic species, is due more to the difference in the condition of the tribes of Africa, and their inferior civilisation, than to any defect in the docility of the African elephant.

* * * * *

In a Lower Congo village I remarked a series of peculiar scars upon the leg of a native, at strangely

regular intervals. The explanation given was that this man once when drunk, went to sleep on a native path. A python discovered him and commenced to swallow him by the leg. At a critical moment he was found, and the natives forthwith released the man by killing the python. The snake's teeth had marked parallel scars at equal distances up the man's leg.

* * * * *

One evening at dusk I marked down a fine fat guinea fowl roosting in the branches of a tree some little distance off in swampy ground by the river side. Cautiously approaching, in order to make sure of my aim, for it was necessary to economise cartridges, I crept stealthily forward, my eyes being riveted upon the bird above and my mind concentrated upon a prospective supper of grilled guinea fowl.

Suddenly it seemed to me as though the whole earth arose in front of me. I had stumbled on to the back of a sleeping hippopotamus. It would be difficult to say which of us was the most startled. The hippopotamus dashed to the river, whilst I picked myself up, and searched for my gun. In the meantime the guinea fowl flew away.

* * * * *

I had shot a buffalo during the afternoon, close to Makola's village, and the evening was merry, there being a sufficient supply of meat to satisfy all hands.

We supped in the open air, sitting around the crackling fire, and the meat was cut in roughly hewn steaks which were grilled upon pieces of stick stuck up over the fire.

Having no tent, I accepted Chief Makola's hospitality, he offering me the shelter of his hut. His cane bed was situated at the far end of the hut. My camp bed, with its mosquito curtain, was put up in the middle.

I soon fell asleep, being wearied by the day's excitement. I was awakened suddenly by the clanking of the brass bracelets and anklets worn by the chief. Being in utter darkness I required a moment or two to realise where I was. The chief had evidently over-eaten himself, and was suffering from bad dreams. I awakened him from his nightmare by throwing something in his direction, and he soon recomposed himself to sleep.

For a few minutes all was quiet again. Just as I was on the point of falling off to sleep again I heard the ominous grunts of an old sow, rooting at my mosquito curtains. I flung my boots at it. Some little time was occupied in expelling the intruder, and once more I stretched myself out to sleep, and was just dozing when several native dogs, who evidently belonged to the house, commenced a furious fight over the remains of my supper, which I had carefully placed under my bed for safe keeping. In

springing up to save my prospective breakfast, I became entangled in the mosquito curtain, and the whole concern fell with a crash.

The chief jumped up very much alarmed, the dogs yelped, and soon the general uproar extended to the occupants of neighbouring huts.

I spent the rest of the evening sitting over the dying embers of the fire outside.

* * * * *

Although the roar of lions may be heard at rare intervals, they seldom frequent the region of the Congo River. On the shore of the Kwa-mouth I once followed the tracks of a lion across an open plain to the point at which it had entered a small belt of forest. It was nearly sundown, but I mustered my courage and entered the forest, remaining there in a vain search until dark. I recall this incident because it marked the occasion of my life when I was most conscious of absolute fear.

* * * * *

It is astonishing how familiarity with danger soon renders men indifferent to it. For example, the Upper Congo is infested with crocodiles, and yet one finds the natives bathing and swimming and utterly ignoring the existence of these creatures in spite of frequent fatalities.

I remember being in the midst of a merry group of children who were bathing in the shallow water at

the edge of the Congo near Lulungu, when suddenly a crocodile emerged from the river and rapidly dashing through their midst, it seized a chubby little fellow who was standing some dozen yards up the bank away from the water. A second later and the crocodile with its prey had disappeared in the river.

Upon another occasion I saw a crocodile seize a native who was sitting in the stern of his canoe, idly drifting. With a stroke of its tail and a turn of the jaws the man disappeared; there was a tinge of blood upon the water and the canoe drifted away empty.

* * * * *

I once dived from a little stern-wheel steamer in which a party of us were travelling on the Upper Congo. The moment I reappeared on the surface of the water I was conscious by the expression on the faces of my companions that there was danger in my vicinity. With two or three strokes I reached the vessel's side, and as I clambered up hastily a large crocodile bumped heavily against the iron sheathing, just at the spot where I had left the water. One of my companions fired and wounded it.

* * * * *

The late Major Parminter once related to me an interesting incident. Seeing a dead chimpanzee in a native village, he affected to be much impressed by the similarity in the features of some of the natives around with those of the chimpanzee.

"Hum!" growled an old savage. "Your words may be true; but I say chimpanzees are full of wisdom, like the white man."

"Yes," echoed another stepping forward, and parting the hair upon the monkey's shoulder: "chimpanzees are much more like the white man than they are like us, for see, their skin is white!"

* * * * *

During a long canoe journey on the Upper Congo, I carried with me four or five very talkative gray parrots, which had been given to me by the wife of the famous Arab Rachid, and taught by her to pronounce phrases in the Kiswahili language.

Drifting down the river, past the vast primeval forest, flocks of wild gray parrots used frequently to fly over our heads whistling and shrieking. The attention of my pets was soon aroused, and it appeared strangely incongruous to hear my birds calling out to the wild ones as they flew past:

"Good morning! What news! I hope you are well! Sit still! Don't disturb yourself!"

* * * * *

In company with Roger Casement on one occasion I camped in a wood, and in the evening while sitting in front of our camp fire, we discussed that great work of Schweinfurth, "The Heart of Africa," a book that we had both recently read. We talked together of the extraordinary ways of the ants de-

scribed therein, and of their methods of journeying in huge armies from one district to another.

A remarkable coincidence occurred. Our native followers suddenly called our attention to an army of ants moving in our direction. Myriads of ants were passing close to our tent in a compact mass, and for some hours, with the aid of fire-brands, we watched the extraordinary progress of these insects.

* * * * *

I frequently observed myriads of white butterflies all flying in one direction, giving the impression of a white cloud passing beside the forest, always following the side of the river.[1]

* * * * *

The pariah dog resembles the Australian dingo. It has a foxy head, sharp nose, and pricked, triangular ears, smooth, fawn-coloured coat, and coiled tail. It wails and howls, but never barks.

The allusion to their coiled tails recalls an amusing remark of Livingstone's. He had heard it said that this twist in the dog's tail was always inclined to follow the same direction. Every time he heard a

[1] *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History* for January, 1891, contains a detailed description of four new species of Lepidoptera collected by the author. They are named as follows:

Romaleosoma Sarita, sp. n.
Romaleosoma Herberti, sp. n.
Girpa Wardi, sp. n.
Romaleosoma rubronotata.

A pamphlet published by Emily Mary Sharpe in 1891 describes seventy-four rare specimens of Lepidoptera collected at Bangala and other places on the Upper Congo by the author.

pariah dog yelping he said that he felt an irresistible inclination to run and ascertain which side his tail coiled.

* * * * *

At Lukungu, in the cataract region, the natives once came to Ingham and myself to complain of the evil ways of a crocodile, which roamed about the valley in a most dangerous manner. The crocodile was said to have killed many people. Instead of confining itself to the vicinity of the river, after the manner of crocodiles in general, this reptile was known to travel quite long distances away from its natural element.

At night when all was still, we sometimes heard what appeared to us to be a hoarse, asthmatical-sounding cough, and it was by these strange sounds that we were able to locate our quarry. After much difficulty and the expenditure of several cartridges, we succeeded in killing the crocodile. The natives were much excited; they dashed forward and stabbed the body with their knives. It was a large crocodile and evidently of great age. In order to preserve the skin, the body was cut open, and examination of the stomach revealed two iron anklets which had been worn by one of its victims, a young girl who had mysteriously disappeared some time before.

ODDITIES

In order to relieve the monotony of my station life, I endeavoured to institute an athletic meeting among the natives of the surrounding villages. Such a thing was an entire novelty in the country, where indeed the advent of the white man dated but a few months back.

The chiefs with whom I discussed the matter readily agreed to bring their most powerful young men on the day appointed. They assented to my suggestions with so little surprise as to make it difficult for me to realise that I was introducing to them an entertainment of quite a strange character.

Early on the day fixed for the sports I was startled by gun-firing. Volleys were fired at regular intervals; indeed the firing lasted until about ten o'clock, by which time I found my station crowded by between five and six hundred natives.

To provide refreshments for the party I had three large pigs roasted whole, and in addition to a limited quantity of palm-wine, which was scarce at that time, I had my two zinc baths filled with water so as to save

my guests the trouble of going down the hill to the stream, which was some three hundred yards away.

I soon discovered that the unanimous wish of the people was to begin proceedings by partaking of refreshments, and although this was quite contrary to the usual custom followed at athletic meetings, I gave way. By noon, provisions were exhausted, and there remained at the bottom of the two baths only a little greasy water where the natives had stooped down to drink after eating their fill of fat pork.

The first item on the programme was a hundred yards race, in which every one seemed eager to enter. It was in vain that I tried to persuade them to relinquish their spears and shields; they explained to me that they could run just as well with them as without them. The starting of this race was a most laborious business; handicapping was out of the question, and the line, when they all stood ready to go, extended for some distance.

I had arranged to start them with a pistol-shot. After numberless false starts and a good deal of angry wrangling, wherein one-half of the company appeared to lose their tempers and the other half to become sulky, I at length succeeded in getting them off.

Immediately all was chaos. The native idea seemed to be to win by disabling one's adversaries, and the race resolved itself into one wild struggle,

during which most of those engaged found themselves on the ground.

The winning post was passed by about fifty men *en masse*.

I at last realised the difficulty of the situation. It was perfectly hopeless to explain matters. Every man who started in the race came to me claiming a prize, each one arguing that as he entered for the event he was justly entitled to reward.

Angry words were soon followed by blows, and during the remainder of the afternoon I found myself in the midst of a violent, turbulent mob of people who were apparently bereft of all reason.

The various chiefs next came to me for payment not only for their services, but also for the services of their people who had run in the race, and also for the gunpowder which they had expended in the morning, in order, so they said, to give the affair a good send-off.

It was late that night before my station resumed its normal quiet, and as I stretched myself out for the night, it was with the full conviction that the time for introducing sporting events in that part of the country was not yet ripe.

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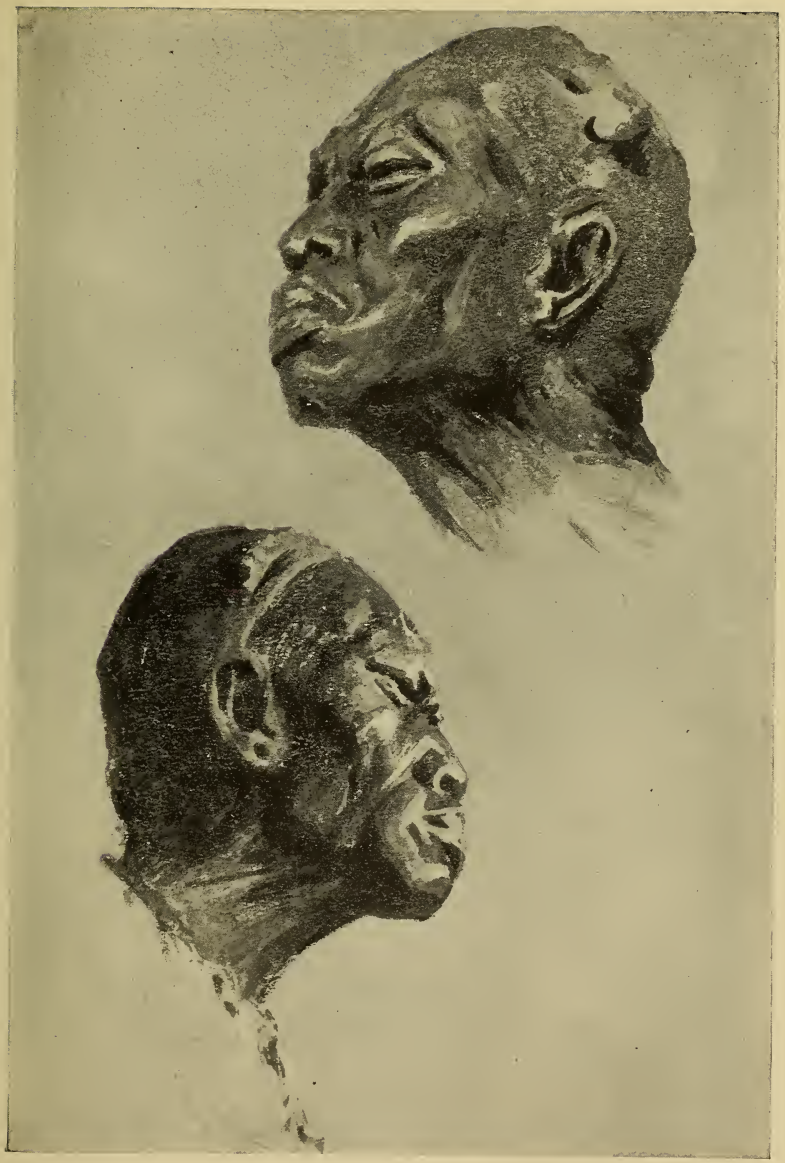
Kroo boys, brought down by outward-bound ships from the Kroo Coast, were generally employed as personnel in the trading houses situated around the mouth of the Congo. Their services were paid for in



Studies by the Author

kind—flint-lock guns and cotton cloth—and it was customary each Sunday to allow the Kroo Boys to view the contents of the stores so that they might feast their eyes upon the bales of cloth, the hogsheads of rum, and the piles of bran-new guns.

The Kroo Boys were christened by the sailors of the ships that brought them from their homes on the Kroo Coast, their names being frequently pricked in tin plates which they wore around their necks.

It was somewhat incongruous to see a gigantic Kroo Boy christened "Butterfly." Other favoured names were: "Wash-a-Crocodile," "Snowball," "Tin-pot," "Flying Jib," and "Sea-breeze." These names imparted a comic aspect to life in a trading house, when, for example, one would hear that "Pea Soup" had stolen from "Saturday Night," or that a quarrel was going on between "Red Herring" and "Bottle-of-Beer."

* * * * *

Among the little band of Zanzibaris who accompanied me in my canoe journey down the Upper Congo were two men who bore singular names—Juma Makengeza, the literal translation of which is "Friday with a squint." The other man's name literally translated meant "Go and shoot an elephant at three o'clock."

* * * * *

I remember an amusing incident when a newcomer, an inexperienced white man, was placed in

charge of a number of Kroo Boys, engaged in the construction of a road at Old Vivi. The new-comer gave vague instructions, principally by gestures, for he was unfamiliar with the pidgen-English spoken by the Kroo Boys. It happened that a consignment of wheelbarrows had just arrived, and indicating these by a wave of his hand as the means by which the work could be accomplished, he forthwith retired to the shadow of a tree and went to sleep.

Great was his astonishment on awakening, to find his Kroo Boys walking along solemnly in single file, each bearing upon *his head* a wheelbarrow full of earth.

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Kroo Boys do not make good soldiers. Once when there was some little difficulty with the natives and guns were fired, the Kroo Boy caravan incontinently bolted. They explained afterwards that they were not "War Boys."

* * * * *

During an attack of illness, when lying on my camp bed in a native hut, I heard a great commotion. Soon a shadow appeared at the door and with great difficulty the Queen of the Village squeezed herself sideways through the aperture, which was none too large.

There was nothing particularly regal about her appearance, albeit that she was a Queen. Her only clothing was a grass fringe round her enormous waist, iron bracelets, and a pair of empty cartridge

cases in her ears. She was quite abnormally stout, weighing probably upwards of three hundred pounds.

Said she: "I have come to see you about a hippopotamus!"

"Sit down," said I, as politely as my knowledge of the native language permitted.

Alongside my camp bed there was a wooden chop box which incidentally served me as a table, and this I indicated to her as a seat. She sat down awkwardly. Rolls of fat enveloped the box and almost touched the ground. Unfortunately the box was not up to her weight and as the Queen warmed up to the subject of her grievance it suddenly emitted a loud, ominous crack. Already somewhat overwrought by excitement, she became instantly panic-stricken, dashed to the door, forgot to turn sideways, became jammed in the framework and in her struggles the entire structure of the hut was nearly carried away.

Thus ended my brief acquaintance with the Queen. She carefully avoided meeting me again, and as I left the village soon afterwards, the story of the hippopotamus remained for ever untold.

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In the year 1885, as Chief of Bangala Station, I witnessed the recruitment of the first band of Bangalas, who were to be sent down to headquarters at Boma, there to be disciplined and drilled, in order to test their suitability for military life.

They were a wild-looking crowd of young savages, these members of a cannibal tribe. Several among them had only recently for the first time seen a white man. When they embarked on the river steam launch which was to conduct them down river, their bodies were covered with paint, and each man carried his spear and shield, for it is the custom of the tribe for a man always to be armed.

A few months later I witnessed their return. They were mustered by a word of command and marched past the Station. It was hard indeed to believe that they were the same savage youths. They wore odd costumes, gaudy soldiers' coats and other cast-off European apparel. Some carried umbrellas under their arms, others carried bottles of salt water from the ocean, for Bangala is situated a thousand miles from the sea, and salt water was esteemed so much a curiosity that they brought back samples to astonish their people.

One roguish-looking fellow smoking a clay pipe, attired in an old dress-coat, with cocked hat and a pair of much worn magenta-coloured riding-breeches, twirled a small cane in his fingers. Chirping up a mangy pariah dog that followed at his heels, he said jauntily, in English: "Come on, come on!"

* * * * *

In company with an Austrian cavalry officer, who by the way, bore the name of a famous European

family, duty led me to the village of Ndunga. The subject of investigation related to the murder of two letter-carriers, and it was supposed that the crime was committed by members of this particular village.

The interview with the Chief Ngudi N'Kama and his court was a picturesque function, and all went well for a time. At an unfortunate moment however, through a misunderstanding, a gun was accidentally fired. In a moment all was confusion. My companion yelled to me to catch the chief, whilst he occupied himself with making prisoners of as many people as he could capture.

Having captured the chief, I was instructed to return with him to our camp. Leaving the village and wending our way along the tortuous native paths, guns were fired at us from all directions, the men being hidden in the high grass.

Our path led us to a deep ravine where there was a fringe of wood, and a stream. It was uncommonly hot. Reaching the wood at the bottom of the hill we rested beside a water-hole.

Ngudi N'Kama, whose hands were tied behind his back, stooped down to drink. Turning my back for a moment, to keep a look-out, for the angry people were lurking in the grass all around us, I found that Ngudi N'Kama had suddenly vanished. At first I stood perplexed; then I darted hither and thither, but found no trace of him. It suddenly occurred to

me that he must have tumbled into the water-hole, and I was only just in time to save him from being drowned.

* * * * *

I once came upon a group of natives who were grumbling. Said the chief: "We are unhappy people! We have nothing left. Leopards have killed our goats, and our plantations have been trampled and ruined by elephants."

"Yes," remarked a dismal-looking fellow, "it's a good thing for us that elephants don't hunt fish. If they did we should have nothing to eat at all."

* * * * *

The chief of Lulungu once sent a very terse message to the captain of an upper river steamer saying that he and his people had robbed many things from the steamer during the night, that they now had shirts and trousers such as the White Man wore, but they had not succeeded in stealing any boots. If the White Man did not send boots by the time the sun was high, there would be war!

* * * * *

It is the custom of the Bakongo natives to end a speech by saying "Wanga," a word signifying: "Do you understand?"

A little African boy, brought up in the Mission, prayed that he might always have plenty to eat, that he might never have any work to do, and that he

might have fine clothes to wear and when he grew up, that he might attain the social standing of the white man. Then said he at the end of his heart-spoken prayer: "Wanga Nzambi, Wanga?" meaning: "Do you understand, God—Do you understand?"

* * * * *

In the course of conversation with a man named Luemba, living in the cataract region of the Lower Congo, he said:

"I have worked for white men and have had much hardship. I have been flogged for making mistakes, I have had my pay stopped, and I have seen much trouble. Now I will worship God and live quietly by the side of the mission station listening to the missionary who says that it does not matter whether we be rich or poor, for rich and poor alike enjoy the same chances of going to heaven. What use is it for me to work? No! I will sleep.

* * * * *

I well remember the occasion of the arrival of the first sewing machine on the Congo. As soon as it was set in motion the natives crowded round and commenced a rhythmical dance, parading round with prancing steps in a hollow circle, dancing, as they presumed, to a new kind of musical instrument.

* * * * *

Mabruki, a Zanzibari lad, had served as cook's mate on an English ship and had picked up a

smattering of the language, but he found difficulty in pronouncing the letter "r." Once when questioned about the dinner, he replied: "Lice and loast meat."

* * * * *

At the mouth of Lomami River the people wear large circular pieces of ivory in their upper lips, which recalls Sequabo's remark to Dr. Livingstone, alluding to a Zambesi tribe who were similarly adorned:

"These people want to make their mouths look like ducks."

* * * * *

In telling a person to be silent, the natives of Lukolela say: "Tie your mouth."

* * * * *

"We do not want cloth," said the people of the Malinga River. "Give us something to wear. Give us beads!"

* * * * *

An Arab one day asked me to explain the contents of a little tin which had been given to him by Wissman during his memorable voyage across Africa.

I took pains to make him understand that the contents of the tin represented the essence of beef prepared in such a manner that the greatest amount

A Congo artist

From a bronze statue by the Author
(Second class gold medal, Paris Salon, 1910)

of nourishment was concentrated in the smallest possible quantity. "You surprise me," said he, "because I was led to understand that it contained a salve, and in fact, I have used it in trying to heal my ulcerated leg!"

* * * * *

I once noticed an alarm bell suspended over the entrance of a stockaded village. It was a very clumsy affair, and only an interloping elephant would have been likely to make it ring.

* * * * *

A long neck is considered a point of beauty in women. I once heard two natives talking of a woman that one of them had recently purchased. Placing his hands one horizontally above the other, the proud purchaser signified by this gesture that her neck was equal in length to the width of his two hands.

* * * * *

Just before the decapitation of a slave, who was being sacrificed according to custom after the death of a chief, I observed a relative of the recently deceased chief engaged in serious conversation with the poor man, whose hands and feet were already bound, and who was just about to be executed. I ascertained that the victim was receiving a message which, after death, he was charged to convey to the

spirit of the deceased chief. The conclusion of the message was somewhat as follows·

"—And tell him when you meet, that his biggest war-canoe, which I inherit, is *rotten.*"

* * * * *

In company with his son a man once visited me and made a long speech. My knowledge of the Kikongo language at that time was very slight, but my keenness was great and I followed the speech carefully in the hopes of detecting words which would supply a clue to his meaning. There were but two words, however, that seemed at all familiar to me: "sick" and "head."

I naturally concluded that the man was suffering from headache and had come to me for medicine, my reputation as a dispenser of bitter draughts and drugs having spread in the surrounding country.

Preparing a somewhat powerful dose of Epsom salts, I handed the man the tin pannikin instructing him by signs and gestures to drink, and that forthwith his head sickness would cease. He handed the tin to his little son, who eagerly put it to his lips. I expostulated with the man for passing his medicine to his son, explaining that it contained no mystic properties, and insisted upon his finishing it, which he did subsequently and against his will.

The following day, in passing through the village, I recognised the same man lying in front of his hut, looking dejected. I expressed my surprise at seeing him in this condition, stating, as far as my linguistic powers permitted me, that I expected the medicine was sufficiently potent to have cured him.

The man rose and shook his head sadly. "There was never anything the matter with me," he explained through an interpreter. "It was my son that was ill. You gave *me* the medicine, and I have been sick ever since."

* * * * *

A touching incident illustrating the sentiment of gratitude followed my efforts to give relief to a suffering baby. Some months afterwards I was surprised in the middle of the night by seeing a dark shadow cast upon the entrance to my tent. A woman's voice, hushed in tone, said to me:

"Here, O White Man, take this egg! Many moons ago my baby suffered. You gave it medicine and it is well. I am a poor woman; I have nothing. But—Oh take this egg!"

Much touched by her words, I arose from my bed, accepted the egg, and placed it in one of my boots for safe-keeping.

The following morning, whilst my caravan was getting ready for the day's march, I gave the egg to my cook, instructing him to poach it for my break-

fast. A few minutes later he returned to me, holding in his hand a broken egg-shell, saying:

"Master, that egg was a bad one!"

* * * * *

Alfred Parminter, in order to impart a little spirit of civilisation into the wilderness, conceived an idea of having all his servants dressed alike. Laying a piece of Manchester cotton cloth on the ground, he placed a servant on it lying on his back, and with a charcoal stick from the fire he traced the boy's form upon the cloth, doubled it, and had the two portions sewn together!

* * * * *

Armed with my .577 express rifle, I was hurrying towards a distant valley, where I had been informed there were elephants to be found. On my way I met a party of six or eight men, armed with flint-lock guns and amply provided with powder-flasks and wallets containing missiles. I was impressed by their warlike appearance.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" said they.

"After elephants," I replied. "And you—where are you going?"

"Oh, we are going to the valley below to shoot rats."

* * * * *

Our Houssa soldiers, who were employed in the Congo Independent State, were recruited from the

Niger country. Many of them had served on the West Coast under English officers. They were nearly all of them fine fellows, devoted and loyal, courageous and honest. They acted as a perfect "set-off" to the Zanzibaris, and they proved themselves invaluable in maintaining order. The contrast between this western race and the eastern African was remarkable. The Houssa was a silent, sturdy fellow, without the faculty of adapting himself to the ways of others; he was slow to learn the Congo languages, and never fraternised with the natives. The Zanzibari, on the other hand, was gay and versatile; quick to learn new dialects, quick to ingratiate himself into the confidence of the natives, fickle perhaps in love-affairs, and generally indifferent to the future.

One Christmas Day our Houssa sergeant-major came to offer his greetings, and suggestively informed us that in Houssaland at Christmas time they generally ate beef "*until their teeth ached.*"

A VILLAGE ROMANCE

It was the noon-day period of idleness in the primitive village home of the Bangala. Since early morning the African sun had poured forth its fierce heat from an unclouded sky, and the air had grown so hot and oppressive that the savages stretched their naked bodies upon the dusty ground, beneath the eaves of their grass-thatched huts, where they lay motionless in attitudes of slumber. So great was the heat of the sun, that even the sun-birds and the butterflies had flown to the cool, shady foliage of the trees, and the heavy breathing of the sleepers was the only sound that broke the death-like silence of the village.

From an adjacent clump of bushes, there suddenly emerged the lithe naked form of a young savage. His broad-bladed spear and metal ornaments glistened in the strong sunlight, and his feather headdress fluttered as he stepped quickly forward to survey the sleeping figures of his tribesmen.

Apparently failing in his quest, he subsequently approached a dilapidated hut, calling softly:

"Balala! O! Balala!"

Almost immediately a handsome, well-formed girl stepped forth from the dark interior. Approaching the young man with a glad smile of recognition, she said:

"Makwata! Hey! You! Is it good or evil news?"

"Balala, my pretty bird, I come to speak good words. Come! let us go where no listener can hear."

Strolling away together, the lovers soon found themselves in a forest of stunted palms, well concealed from prying eyes and listening ears. For some moments the young man gazed upon the dusky beauty in silent admiration.

"And what may be thy great good news, Makwata?" inquired Balala, coyly, as she smoothed her braided hair and plucked a fresh green palm-leaf into tiny shreds.

Throwing his spear aside, Makwata placed his hand upon her shoulder:

"This morning, when the sun was high, I went far into the forest yonder in search of game. I went alone. As I picked my way through the thorny bushes, I heard a sound. I stepped forward without noise. In front of me stood an old bull elephant —an elephant with long, gleaming tusks. He was sleeping; his body rested against a monster ant-hill. As I looked upon those large shining tusks I thought of you, Balala. There, before me, were two ele-

phant tusks large enough to buy you from your greedy father. Some good spirit must have led me to that spot. I gripped my spear, the same one that lies on the ground, and, with one plunge, I drove the whole blade into the elephant's shoulder, into the place that kills quickly. Then I darted aside, and watched the great elephant shake, stagger, fall and die."

"What? It is dead? You killed the elephant? Oh, Makwata! Some good spirit was indeed with you this day. Brave Makwata! Good Makwata!" and Balala coiled her arms around her lover's neck, and gazed into his face with an expression of admiration and love.

"But, Makwata, art thou sure that it would be a good bargain to pay my father two such valuable tusks of ivory for me? Two large tusks would surely buy two, if not three, women stronger to work, with broader backs to carry burdens, than mine."

"Your words are true, Balala, but to me you are worth more than all other women. Your saucy laugh, your happy heart, and your pretty face and figure, shall be mine. For many weary moons I have been poor—too poor to buy you. All that time I have lived in constant fear lest my enemy, Mueli, would take you. His eye has been upon you, and is he not a chieftain, and has he not many slaves and tusks of ivory? But now my fear is passed, for to-morrow,

A Congo idyll

From a bronze group by the Author

when the sun is still high, I will see thy father and pay his price. Then Balala, thou wilt be my wife."

Balala clapped her hands like a delighted child.

"This moon is now full. In fourteen days it will be gone. Think, Makwata! we can be wed on the day of the new moon. Do not all the great charm-doctors of our tribe say good fortune follows a new moon marriage?"

"It is so. In fourteen days, nuni ami (my bird), we will eat from one dish. To-morrow I will commence to build a hut, and I will fish for you, and I will hunt for you, my Balala."

"O Makwata! My heart beats for joy. See the tears of happiness in my eyes."

Thus they continued to talk of their prospective happiness, until the sun was well past its zenith, and its rays shone slantwise through the palms, casting trellis-like shadows upon the ground. In the village a few naked boys bestirred themselves, and commenced to carry on a mimic warfare, with their miniature bows and reed arrows. As the lovers parted, a wounded dog ran yelping and howling past them. Some mischievous boy had fired a well-aimed arrow into its skinny ribs.

Makwata's elephant provided an ample feast of strong-flavoured meat for all, and throughout the afternoon the air reeked with the odour of cooking flesh, and echoed with shouts and careless laughter.

Full stomachs make happy hearts among these poor wild forest-dwellers of Central Africa.

In the evening after the sun had set and when the fireflies commenced to sparkle like glittering diamonds around the bushes in the village a monster wooden drum boomed forth an invitation to a night dance in celebration of the feast.

Later on, hundreds of naked feet shuffled and stamped upon the ground, keeping time to the rhythm of a weird song, in which the rich bass voices of the men formed, as it were, an echo to the shrill falsetto chanting of the women. Rows of dark, naked bodies, glistening with perspiration, advanced and receded, with sinuous movements, amidst the luxuriant foliage of graceful palms and broad-leaved banana-trees. Above the sound of clanging and jingling metal ornaments, treble-toned drums of goat-skin rattled in unison with the booming of huge hollow log drums, the deep, full sound of which filled the clear night air with reverberation.

The lightest-hearted dancer in all the gathering of childish-minded revellers was Balala, the proud and happy favourite of Makwata. From time to time she glanced upwards at the waning moon, and thought how wearily the time passed.

Makwata, the hero of the hour, was absent that night in the great dark forest, guarding the precious tusks of ivory, which, at sunrise, were to purchase

Bust of Bakongo girl (*Musée de Luxembourg, Paris*)
From a bronze by the Author

Balala from her father. Makwata too glanced sometimes at the moon, which shone faintly through the foliage overhead, and he pictured to himself the lithe and supple form of his young favourite pirouetting and prancing as the leader of the dance. His savage heart was softened by the influence of love.

During the next two weeks the waning moon passed gradually away; and Makwata, who had satisfactorily concluded his bargain with Balala's father, and who had been busy building a hut with bundles of tall reeds and plaited palm fronds, now gazed contentedly upon his future home, which was completed even to the three-stoned hearth upon which the family cooking-pot was to rest above the burning logs.

At last the long-looked-for day of the new moon arrived, and as it was dull and showery Makwata decided to take advantage of the auspicious condition of the weather to spend the morning in fishing, in order that his larder might be abundantly stocked for his wedding supper.

Balala, even more blithe and gay than usual, spent the morning with her female relatives, who in the intervals of gossip, dressed and plaited her crisp, woolly hair into becoming braids, using as a comb a long iron skewer, and greasing the points with red palm oil.

Returning at mid-day from his fishing excursion, Makwata made his canoe fast to the overhanging branch of a tree, and stepped ashore with a basket well filled with squirming eels and fresh-caught fish. His heart was light and his spirits were high for that day at sunset Balala was to share his hut. As he passed through the narrow dirty streets of the village, and glanced at the crowds of cruel coarse-featured women, he knew that there was not in all his tribe a brighter prettier girl than Balala.

"Hist! hist! Makwata," cried a withered old woman, who lay upon a heap of rotting grass by the wayside. "Makwata! I am sick and hungry. See these feeble arms, and look upon my miserable face. I am a slave but give me food Makwata."

Makwata threw a glistening fish upon the ground beside her and hurried on.

Shortly past noon the village was aroused by a strong man's angry voice. With curses and shouts of fury, Makwata dashed from street to street, with poised spear. His limbs shook and his voice was inarticulate with rage.

Balala had disappeared.

Some evil had befallen the bride upon her wedding-day.

Makwata, instantly suspecting foul play, had set off in search of his bitter enemy and rival, Mueli.

From hut to hut he rushed in a state of frenzy. His hoarse voice and angry features caused great alarm among the women, who rushed away shrieking, with their children in their arms. The men quietly collected their knives and spears, in anticipation of trouble.

The search was in vain. Mueli had also vanished.

With a groan of anguish Makwata threw himself upon the ground, at the foot of a giant cotton-tree, some little distance from the village, and ground his teeth. While he lay in an agony of despair, the old withered hag, to whom he had given fish, appeared from the bushes and silently approached him.

"Makwata!"

Makwata, startled by her voice, sprang to his feet and scowled angrily.

In a mysterious tone she said "Listen to my words before you look so wrathfully upon me. Your heart is sad, for evil has been done to you. Makwata, I know where Mueli hides; I followed him. It is with him you will find Balala."

"Where are they? Speak quickly, woman, for my blood boils."

"Take thy strongest spear, Makwata, and go straight into the forest yonder, in a direction towards the setting sun. There is no path. Go straight and thou wilt find them. Settle thy quarrel with

Mueli then. He is an evil-hearted enemy to us both."

Without a word Makwata dashed into the gloomy forest with his keen-edged knife and spear. The old woman watched him disappear, as, in a chuckling tone, she mumbled to herself as she turned away towards the bushes: "Have I not paid thee well for thy fish, Makwata? May thy arm be strong."

Far away in the forest, amidst enormous trees and a perfect labyrinth of vines and creepers, upon the bank of a stream stood Mueli, calmly watching the contortions of a young girl, who lay writhing upon the ground with her limbs firmly bound by twisted creepers.

There was a cruel, brutal expression upon his face as he said, sneeringly:

"Thy bonds are strong, and thy cries are useless here. Listen now. To-night I leave thee here for I am going to the village to take Makwata's life. To-morrow I return, and you will then be one of the wives of Mueli, the Bangala chieftain."

Balala writhed and shrieked until the woods echoed with her cries.

"O Mama! Hey Makwata! Hey!"

A twig snapped, a leafy branch was thrust aside, and Makwata bounded forward. When within a few paces of Mueli he hurled his spear with furi-

Native village, Bangala

Photograph taken by the Author

ous strength, but in so doing he caught his foot in a creeper and almost fell. At the same instant his blood was chilled by a piercing scream from Balala.

Makwata's aim had been diverted by his fall, and, instead of striking Mueli, the blade had pierced Balala's body.

Thoroughly maddened with fury, he clutched the handle of his sickle-bladed knife and rushed upon Mueli, who, however, deftly turned the blow with the haft of his spear. Makwata's next blow was not so easily parried. With a sickening thud his knife struck deep into his opponent's skull. Mueli dropped instantly to the ground, and his lifeless body rolled down the bank towards the stream.

Seizing Balala in his arms, Makwata found that consciousness had left her.

Her life's blood was ebbing fast away from the wound of her unhappy lover's spear.

Though almost paralysed with grief, Makwata cut her bonds and tried his best to staunch the blood with cold water from the stream and with broad leaves.

At length her large, soft eyes opened. Looking into Makwata's face with a sad smile, she murmured faintly:

"Evil spirits, Makwata! It is all the doing of evil spirits."

Makwata groaned in utter despair. With an effort Balala raised her hand and pointed to an opening in the foliage overhead.

"O Makwata! Look up at the sky. What dost thou see? Is it not our new moon?"

Her arm dropped, her eyes closed, and with a quivering sigh she died.

STANLEY

THERE were two Stanleys: Stanley the African traveller, and Stanley himself. I claim to have known only Stanley the African traveller. I first met him in the year 1884, the year I entered Africa under his auspices.

Personally, he impressed me as being a man whose life had been embittered, and he appeared to take it as an accepted fact that every man's hand was against him.

During a conversation with him in Africa, I was emboldened to say to him:

"They say that you are hard, Mr. Stanley."

"Hard!" he replied shortly. "You've got to be hard. If you're not hard, you're weak. There are only two sides to it!"

Stanley was essentially a strong man, begotten in no ordinary spirit. He possessed a power of determination and disregard of consequences which was remarkable.

It is difficult to conceive that any man but Stanley could have successfully accomplished the explora-

tions which are stamped with his name. His indomitable will carried him forward, his sturdy physique resisted disease, his astute diplomacy converted enemies into friends, and his good luck remained with him throughout.

Stanley's character certainly bore the impress of his African life. His long experience of African human nature had perhaps revealed to him too much of the weak side of life; in consequence of this he had grown to be distrustful and to hold perhaps too poor an estimate of mankind in general.

His speech was often coloured by idiomatic phrases, suggesting the flowery speech of Africans. His methods were those of a man who held himself instinctively superior to all around him. During long years his Zanzibari followers had proclaimed him "Great Master," and had approached him reverently as "Father."

An indispensable element in dealing with Africans is power, and that quality was clearly stamped, not upon his face alone, but upon his entire personality. He was unsparing in his criticisms of men and their actions; but for the most part he confined his judgments to subjects which were well within the scope of his own experience and observation.

He always sought to be just, according to his lights.

The world at large recognised Stanley's greatness as an explorer. Volumes containing the narration

of his exploits and achievements are to be found on every bookshelf. But after all, what a difference there is between the bare written account of work done—with its cold record of dates and names of places—and actuality.

After the finding of Dr. Livingstone in 1871, Stanley returned again to Africa in 1874 to solve the problem of the Lualaba River—a problem that had absorbed the attention and fired the ambition of Dr. Livingstone for some years previous to his death. Proceeding inland from Zanzibar, Stanley navigated Lake Albert Nyanza, and subsequently circumnavigated Tanganyika Lake. From Ujiji, on Lake Tanganyika, he proceeded to Nyangwe, the Arab slavers' centre, situated on the mysterious Lualaba River. Embarking his party in native canoes, he traced the river, by descending it, for a distance of over two thousand miles, and thus identified the Lualaba with the Congo.

The entire journey, lasting 999 days, was fraught with great privation and suffering and great loss of life, including that of his three white companions, one of whom, Frank Pocock, lost his life by drowning when within about ten days' direct march of the Atlantic coast.

By accomplishing this bold and brilliant journey, Stanley at once culled the brightest remaining jewel from the crown of African hidden mysteries. To have successfully traversed for the first time in the

world's history two thousand miles of the Congo River's course, and to have solved for ever the problem which had occupied the minds of all geographers since the discovery of the mouth of the Congo River by Diego Cam in 1482 was to fulfil indeed a great purpose.

After a brief rest, Stanley returned once more to the scene of his African work, and under the patronage of Leopold II., King of the Belgians, he assisted in founding the Congo Independent State, a vast territory comprising an area of 900,000 square miles, with an estimated native population of from 20,000,000 to 30,000,000.

In the year 1886 Stanley entered Africa for the fourth and last time as an explorer, in command of the Emin Pacha Relief Expedition. This expedition was organised for the purpose of relieving Emin Pacha, the Governor of Equatorial Africa, whose condition was known to have become precarious. Stanley fulfilled this mission, but only after experiencing the most severe hardships endured in any of his explorations, and with the loss of over 400 out of the 650 men he had taken with him.

Nine English officers were engaged; at the time of writing there remain but two survivors, Mr. John Rose Troup and myself.[1]

[1] "My Life with Stanley's Rear Guard." By Herbert Ward. Chatto & Windus.

Stanley Pool

Photograph taken by the Author

Nearly three years were occupied in the journey. Among the important geographical results of the expedition was the discovery of Mount Rowenzori, estimated to be 17,000 feet high; of Lake Albert Edward, and of the south-west extension of Lake Victoria. Lake Albert Edward proved to be the primary source of the White Nile, and it was shown that its waters connect through the Semliki with the Albert Nyanza.

* * * * *

On the way up-country with the Emin Pacha Expedition, a halt was made at Stanley Pool. The native chiefs had every reason to complain of the depredations made by Stanley's black personnel.

One chief, bolder than the rest, approached Stanley, complaining bitterly of the manner in which his plantations had been robbed, and of the way in which the domestic harmony of his village had been disturbed.

At first the chief retained his dignity, and I was much impressed by his natural grace, and by his eloquence.

Stanley, sitting on a camp-stool, listened calmly as the interpreter repeated the chief's complaint, all the while fixing his keen grey eyes on the face of the chief. So keen was the glance, and so powerfully hypnotic, that the chief soon became very uneasy.

Stanley gave instructions to a bugler to call up all hands. Then, in company with the chief, he strolled leisurely past the six or seven hundred men who had fallen in line, saying at intervals to the chief: "Was it this man, O Chief, who robbed you?—or this? Is this the man that caused unhappiness in your homes?"

Utterly disconcerted, the chief shook his head sadly, and muttered:

"These men all look alike. I know not which are the robbers."

Addressing him in a benevolent tone of voice, through an interpreter, Stanley placed his hand on the chief's shoulder, and said significantly:

"The next time your peace is disturbed, O Chief, place a mark upon the man—*mark* him! Then when we collect our men and when we look all along the line, we shall be able at once to distinguish the culprit!"

* * * * *

In order to pacify the Arabs, who would otherwise have interfered with Stanley's intention of following the Congo route on his expedition for the relief of Emin Pacha, Stanley entered into a treaty with Tippo Tib, at Zanzibar, appointing him Governor of Stanley Falls.

In answer to a remark questioning the wisdom of trusting such a renowned bloodthirsty slave-raider

as Tippo Tib, he replied, with his usual calm, immovable expression:

"You know that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth——"

* * * * *

Embarking on board the Mission steamer *Peace* at Stanley Pool, bound up river, I had the interesting experience of being alone with Stanley as far as Bolobo, on the Upper Congo. At the very outset of our journey there occurred an accident which might have been fatal to us all.

We had not been under way many minutes, when our tiller was carried away under the strain of the very swift current against which we were steering. For a short time things looked very black indeed. Our steering gear was useless, and to make matters worse we were being carried by the current straight towards a rocky island. The anchors were let go immediately, but for a while they proved useless. Suddenly they caught and the little steamer heeled over and almost capsized.

The moment was one of grave danger, but strangely enough, not of undue excitement. Stanley, at the bow, with eye strained to catch the effect of our sudden stoppage, cried: "Look out!" in a way which impressed all hands. The trembling blacks watched and waited, but moved not; and after some little time we succeeded, though with great difficulty, in

getting our little vessel from its perilous position. By the alternate working of our twin screws we made sufficient headway to enable us to reach a station about half a mile from the point where our accident had happened. Here the remainder of that day and a portion of the next were occupied in repairing the damage done.

* * * * *

That same evening, in spite of our mishap, Stanley was in excellent spirits, and he related with much dramatic power several incidents of his African experiences. I recall his story of Baruti, a boy hailing from Basoko. Of a cannibal tribe, he was befriended by Stanley who took him to Europe and employed him as a page. The savage instinct was ineradicable, and in spite of kindly treatment he retained many of the lower characteristics of his race. It appears that one evening in London, during Stanley's absence, Baruti endeavoured to persuade the housekeeper to give him a certain choice dish from the larder. This being refused, Baruti became violent in his manner, and seizing the housekeeper's baby he dashed up stairs. Upon reaching the top landing Baruti held the baby over the balusters and threatened to let it fall unless his demand was granted.

* * * * *

Ascending the Congo with Stanley on the Mission steamer, a work of vital importance was the cutting

The Author on the Upper Congo, Emin Pacha Relief Expedition

of wood to provide fuel for the engines, an operation which necessitated working far into the night. On certain occasions in fact, entire nights were passed hewing wood in the forest and cutting it in lengths to fit the furnace.

Once, during a spell of bad weather, we had a particularly busy time, and for two days and two nights consecutively I had but little chance of rest. Contrary to my habit, I passed two days without shaving. At the conclusion of a conversation with Stanley, he glanced at my chin and said:

"Dr. Livingstone, you know, used to shave *every* morning."

* * * * *

Stanley once called his Zanzibaris to turn out at early dawn. Being thoroughly tired out, there were but a few who responded to his call. Stanley then shouted out in Kiswahili:

"Will you follow me to death?" And he was immediately answered by shouts of:

"Ewallah bwana!" ("Yes, yes! we will, master!")

* * * * *

I well remember one evening we spent together on the little missionary steamer, *Peace*. All was calm ashore. Our followers were grouped around their fires. The night sky was clear, and an air of tranquillity reigned throughout.

Stanley sat on the hatchway, cross-legged, a usual and characteristic attitude of his. The other two members of the party were missionaries—Mr. Darby, and another missionary, who acted as engineer.

The entire evening was spent discussing the Bible. The Missionaries and Stanley appeared to be in perfect accord, and I spent a most interesting evening listening to their theological discussions.

As we were retiring for the night Stanley caused some surprise by remarking unexpectedly:

"There is just one of the miracles that I was never able to take literally: it was that one about the fall of the walls of Jericho, when the Angel Gabriel blew a trumpet."

* * * * *

I clearly recall the afternoons spent on board the *Peace*, seated alongside Stanley in the bow of the Mission steamer, forging ahead slowly against the current, past wooded shores and islands. A hot sun, a blinding glare upon the water; the smell of castor-oil used for machinery; the powerful pungent smell of the crowd of perspiring men packed closely together; the noise of the propeller lashing the water, and the incessant mumble of men's voices.

Stanley often questioned me at length about North Borneo, where I had travelled for a year alone, in the far interior; he seemed interested in comparing the relative physical prospects of the two countries, being

careful to omit no favourable feature which might count to the advantage of Central Africa, the country with which he was so essentially identified.

* * * * *

At Bolobo a temporary encampment was formed, being left in my charge. Here Stanley had an interview with the principal of the native chiefs.

Stanley seated as usual upon his camp-stool, with folded arms, watched the approaching figure of the chief. He was a fine-looking fellow, this chief, bedecked with native finery, and carrying a spear in his right hand, and a long, narrow shield in his left. He swaggered up in front of Stanley with his head erect, his shoulders well set back. With a majestic gesture he lifted his spear and plunged it in the ground, and cast his shield beside it.

He commenced his speech alone, but presently continued through the medium of an interpreter. The object of his speech was in the nature of a protest against the white man's camp being formed in such close proximity to his village.

All this time Stanley sat motionless, gazing into the chief's face without uttering a word.

By degrees the chief's bearing changed. His figure seemed to shrink. In vain he gazed to the right and to the left, but the powerful gaze of Stanley's keen blue eyes was too strong an influence for him.

Ignominiously he gathered up his shield, and plucking his spear from the ground, he trailed it after him as he retired.

I noticed a peculiar smile on Stanley's face as the incident closed.

* * * * *

Once when talking with Stanley about native character, I casually alluded to the extraordinary mystery that our sudden arrival must have caused. I tried to picture the impression we made upon the natives with our great number of Zanzibaris, Soudanese, and Arabs. Stanley remarked somewhat impatiently:

"My dear fellow, in this world we can't stop to think about the impressions we create. No time for that sort of thing."

* * * * *

When leaving me in charge of the Bolobo camp, Stanley shook hands with me warmly, and said:

"Well, Ward, look after your men. Don't rush into any fighting. Keep peaceful. But, mind you, if you have to fight—*fight!* Good-bye, and God bless you."

* * * * *

Transporting Stanley's boxes down country, there was one large box slung on a pole which required

Stanley Falls

Showing Weyna Method of Fishing

Photograph taken by the Author

two carriers. This particular box caused me endless trouble in the villages I passed through.

It is not etiquette among Africans to ask a visitor his business, or the object of his visit. However, on this occasion their curiosity proved too strong, and they departed from their rule. There was a general opinion that this box contained a corpse. On one or two occasions we were, in fact, on the verge of serious trouble, for attempts were made to stop my progress in certain villages. The natives refused to sell me food, or to allow me to camp near them. I assured them that the box did not contain anything like a corpse. "Well, show us the inside," said they. The box was locked, and I had no key. I was therefore unable to prove the truth of what I said. "Then go back! Leave our country! We will not allow you to pass by here," they answered.

* * * * *

In reply to a complaint concerning the lack of proper food that was made by a band of his companions, in the early days of the formation of the Congo Independent State, Mr. Stanley calmly replied:

"I am very sorry, gentlemen; but the goats have been very bony lately."

On a similar occasion the same complaint of lack of provisions was made by a delegation of Accra

clerks at headquarters. After listening attentively, Mr. Stanley said gravely: "Let us pray."

* * * * *

At Ingham's Missionary Station, Stanley was attracted by a bright little native boy, and patting him on the head said he:

"I should not be surprised, Ingham, if this little fellow becomes a bishop."

"I don't know," said Ingham, "he is sometimes very disagreeable."

"A sure sign he will be a bishop," replied Stanley.

* * * * *

Sport, in the form of shooting big game, seems to have had no attraction for Stanley.

During a conversation with Glave, on the subject of sport, Stanley remarked:

"Now supposing there was at the present time an elephant near by, I should remain here in comfort and safety, and should say: "Glave, there's an elephant; why don't you take your rifle and go and shoot him?"

* * * * *

During building operations in Vivi, Dr. Rolf Leslie, the principal medical officer of the staff, turned his hand to carpentering. As Stanley passed by, Leslie said:

"You see, Mr. Stanley, I am a bit of a carpenter."

"Yes," replied Stanley, "our Saviour was once a carpenter."

* * * * *

Stanley derived his African nickname, "Bula Matadi" at Issanghila in the year 1881. At this date Stanley was engaged in transporting a small steam launch overland in sections, and it became necessary to employ charges of dynamite at certain places to blast obstructive rocks. The chief of a small village at the back of Issanghila related to me[1] the following incident which may be accepted as bearing directly upon the origin of this famous name. Said he:

"It was long ago. A small boy ran toward us; he said: 'That strange white man yonder is breaking the stones.'"

The native mind was greatly impressed by the idea that man should attempt to interfere with existing nature. The native's mind accepted things as they were. If a tree fell across their path, they walked around it: Nature caused it to fall, they reasoned, and it was not for them to interfere.

The correct spelling of the name is "Bula Matadi"—from Bula—to break; Matadi, stones (singular Ntadi, a stone).[2] In the interior of Africa and among the Zanzibaris the letter "r" is frequently substituted for "d," a peculiarity which accounts for

[1] Issanghila, 1884. [2] Kikongo language.

the difference of spelling Bula Matari, instead of the original form of Bula Matadi.

* * * * *

Stanley died six years ago.[1] When I attended his funeral service in Westminster Abbey, my feelings corresponded with those of the Congo Africans, for I knew the natives would say:

"It is not true; Bula Matadi is not dead."

[1] May 10, 1904.

THE WORDS OF ULEDI PAGANI

Among the Zanzibaris of the Emin expedition who were left behind at Yambuya on account of sickness and incapacity were many men who had spent their lives tramping through unknown parts of Africa. In spite of a sufficiently intimate knowledge of the Kiswahili language, I found great difficulty in obtaining any interesting information from them. Being for the most part slaves, their duty had been to carry and to follow. Although endowed with a certain intelligence and quick wits, they were not good observers, and the narratives they related contained monotonous reiteration of how they had "seen trouble"—alluding to the privations and maladies they had encountered on their long journeys.

One bright exception however was Uledi Pagani.

He was a mild-looking old man—old, not in the sense of years, but in appearance; for his past life had been a hard one and he bore traces of having suffered. His health was bad, and in spite of kindly treatment he grew weaker and thinner as the days passed by.

As a result of the many hours I passed sitting beside him in a quiet corner of our camp, I gathered together the following interesting summary of his life. He spoke frankly and simply, but he volunteered little, although ever ready to reply to any question put to him. For his sincerity and truthfulness I entertain not the slightest doubt; for this poor, weather-beaten wanderer, whose back was bent with toil, and whose body bore traces of many wounds and sores, had passed the period when younger and less experienced men would be tempted to occasionally elaborate or exaggerate their facts.

The words of Uledi Pagani are written down as he uttered them, translated literally, without amplification or alteration.

During the early years of his life he made several journeys to Masai-land with his Arab owner Bwana Wadoud, who traded for ivory with merchandise advanced by a Banyan. Upon Stanley's arrival in Zanzibar in 1871, Uledi engaged himself as a petty chief, and accompanied Stanley in his search for Livingstone, and he was present at the meeting in Ujiji. He remained with Livingstone after Stanley's return, and accompanied Livingstone about the country until his death.

"Dr. Livingstone was an old man?"

"Ah, yes, very old; he had no teeth, but they boiled his meat soft."

"What did Dr. Livingstone say to you all when you arrived with Stanley at Ujiji?"

"He said: 'I am very happy you have brought me my child.' Ah, he was a good old man and we called him 'Bwana Makubwa.' Stanley told us he was a great man."

"Did Dr. Livingstone write much and make pictures of the people?"

"Yes, he had a box on three sticks which he put his head in and covered himself with a red cloth."

"Did the people all like him?"

"Oh, master, they loved him very much."

"Tell me about his death."

"Well! the Bwana Makubwa was sick about six days in a hut in the middle of the village Kataui, on the shores of the Lake Bemba. He used to put his hand on his chest and say that there the pain was. He died at sundown, but just before that he gave us some papers and told us to take them to the consul at Zanzibar, and also his big dog. When he was dead we all cried, and the natives also. The chief was blood-brother of the Bwana Makubwa. We disembowelled his body and dried it in the sun for twenty-two days; we then rolled it in blankets, put it into the bark shell of a small tree, and then sixty-five of us, under our Munipara Muimi Hasali, carried it to the coast."

"Why did you take all this trouble over the body?"

"Because we were afraid that the people in Zanzibar would say we had neglected him, and he had been killed, or that perhaps we ourselves should have been accused of murder. But the people were pleased in Zanzibar that we had brought the body, and they sent it home in a ship, and afterwards we had rings given us with our names on them."

"What were the names of the two men who saved the Doctor from being torn to pieces by the lion?"

"Wadi Mozera and Muini Hasali."

Uledi Pagani then enlisted with an Englishman whose name unfortunately he forgets, but whose nick-name among his men was Kandenga, and went to Uganda.

After his return from this journey he enlisted with ten French priests, and accompanied them to Ujiji. One died on the road to Ngogo and four went on to Uganda with Muini Pemba.

Again returning, he took engagement with Captain Carter, nicknamed by his men Paperone [one who is extravagant with his goods], and went elephant catching.[1] Upon this business being concluded, he remained in Zanzibar, earning a precarious living, as a salesman of garden produce in the market, until Stanley returned to form his expedition for the ex-

[1] Captain Carter, with two tame Indian elephants, entered Africa from Zanzibar on behalf of the King of the Belgians, in an attempt to capture and to tame African elephants. The expedition came to grief.

ploring the lakes and the Lualaba River. He then went on to relate how the young Englishmen, Barker and Edward and Frank Pocock, died. The journey from Nyanda to the Mute Ngige Lake and the explorations of Tanganyika and subsequent journey to Nganwe, of the compact with Tippo Tib and the descent of the Lualaba River.

I asked him: "You saw plenty of fighting with natives?"

"Oh, yes, plenty of trouble; we killed many, many men."

"Where were you when Frank Pocock was drowned at Zinga on the Lower Congo?"

"I was there and saw the canoe capsized."

Upon being asked to relate all he knew, he said:

"Frank Pocock, known to us as Mabuiki, because he was our friend and would often eat from the same pot with us, was above some bad water with a few of us who were to wait until Stanley sent word to us —he was a short distance ahead—he had gone to see the natives.

"Uledi and his boatmen came to take down a canoe, and Pocock said he would also go in the canoe, for said he: 'How can I wait with no food? It is nearly sunset and I have had nothing to eat to-day.' Uledi told him it was not possible to pass the bad water with him in the canoe, but he would not get out.

"Soon after we started the canoe capsized. Saburi ran up to Stanley and told him. And soon after I came up. Stanley was angry with us, and used loud words and said: 'Why did you let him get into the canoe?'

"But what could we do? He was our master and would have flogged us had we tried to prevent him forcibly.

"After Pocock's death at Zinga all the men became low-spirited and miserable; for three days they wailed aloud with grief at the loss of 'Mabuiki,' their 'Bwana mdogo' (little master), to whom they had become very much attached. Stanley grew angry with them for their weakness, and said: 'Was he your father? No, I am your father; and would he have paid you your money in Zanzibar? No! I am the man you must rely on for your money, and now let us have no more crying like women.'

"Shortly after this we were all starving, and the beads we had would not buy food, so we tried to steal manioc from the plantations. Some of us got shot, and four or five were caught and kept by the natives at Manyanga, and some place opposite Ndunga."

"I suppose you were glad when you reached the coast?"

"Yes, yes, indeed, master. There we had fine food and cloth to cover our bodies (for we were

naked), and wine and all things like the "Wasungu" (Europeans.) At Cape Town we had plenty of things given us, and when we got home to Nguja we all cried, because we had given up all hope while going down the cataract region of the Congo River.

"But then, we soon spent our money and had to look about for work again. When I first returned to Zanzibar, I made up my mind I would not travel any more, but when Stanley came again to get men to go to the Congo to make stations, I touched the pen and went back again. We had hard work getting the whale-boat and the *Royal* up to Stanley Pool.

"I was at Manyanga when Stanley was so ill and it was there in the big market that I saw Salimini Rada, one of the men who was caught for stealing manioc when we were starving. He gave me a present of some big kwangas, fish, and peanuts, and told me that he was very happy, that he had a wife and child, and did not want to return to Zanzibar, so he always kept away from us, lest any one should catch him and send him home. I know his wife and two children in Zanzibar.

"After serving three years on the Congo I went home, bought three slaves with my money, but I could not rest, so I went with a Jesuit Father to Tabora, Nyanyembe, and made a few other little

journeys until Stanley once more came to Zanzibar to recruit men for this present expedition. . . ."

Surely the travels of Uledi Pagani were unique. Many volumes have been written upon the subjects so briefly alluded to by Uledi. Poor fellow! A hard fate indeed for such a man to die from starvation.

THE IMPRESSIONS OF BULELU

When my Congo friend Alfred Parminter returned from Africa, he brought with him a young man named Bulelu, a member of the cannibal tribe of the Bangala.

Favoured as I was by a knowledge of the native language spoken in his country—for I had myself passed a considerable time there—I took great interest in observing the impressions produced upon him by the extraordinary change in his surroundings. I took pains to note his replies to my questions, and I endeavoured as nearly as possible to record his sayings in his own idiom.

"Do I like this country? It is a good country. There are many good things to eat. There are no animals with evil hearts to kill you."

"What things have most surprised you in our country, Bulelu?"

"All things. Lo! How many white men live! How silent they are! With us, we all speak and make sounds; here men walk with their mouths tied! The big houses make me stupid. The wide paths of the city, with the horses and the carts, make my head

tired. There are so many things to see that my eyes become sleepy. All is good here. I know nothing bad; but—I am all alone, and I feel lost and sad."

Bulelu relapsed into silence, squatted upon his heels, and watched the flies circling in a sunbeam.

From long association with his kinsmen in Africa, I was enabled to observe a certain shyness in Bulelu's manner, which contrasted strangely with the natural self-confidence which is characteristic of his race. Apparently, he had grown to comprehend the wide distinction between the lives of the civilised and the lives of the barbarians, and the realisation of his own inferiority had filled him with a sense of shame.

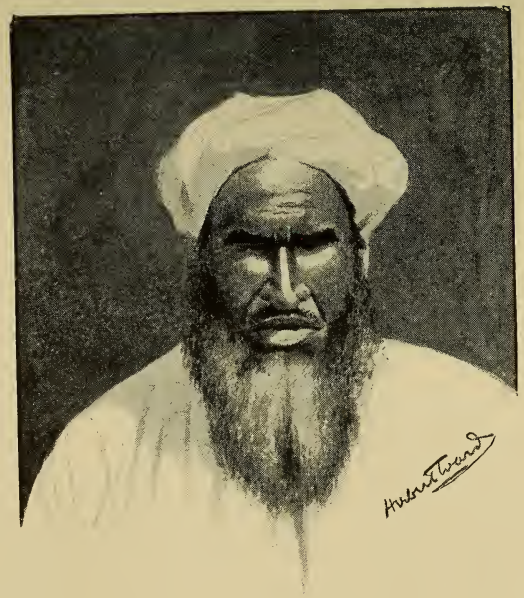
Gazing at the African weapons which adorned my walls, Bulelu flicked his fingers and said excitedly:

"Koi-ye! See, there hangs ngura, na likongo—our knives and our spears. Look! O White Man, there are spots of blood upon that shield. It is surely the blood of my own people. Ekh! my heart wants my home."

"These weapons are like friends of yours, Bulelu. Is it not so? They awaken in your mind the recollections of your life at Bangala. Yours is a wild country, Bulelu. Can you tell me some of the incidents that happened in your villages before you knew of white men?"

"That was many moons ago. I was only so high," and Bulelu indicated two feet from the ground,

Beleiu
Drawn by the Author



An Arab slaver
Drawn by the Author

Native type, Basoko
Drawn by the Author

"when Bula Matadi passed down the great river.[1] I was small, but I heard his guns. He fought my people, and killed many men. There was Mobololo, and Dinguma, and Isongo, and Manyali. They were great chiefs, and their spirits all left us at that time. Then, afterwards I remember how we fought the people of Mbenga."

Bulelu, who was now standing half-way up a staircase, commenced to gesticulate. His reserve had vanished, and he entered into his subject with warmth.

"The people of Mbenga attacked us, for they said we had an evil spirit, and that we had sent the powerful White Man to kill them. But they lied. They came in canoes, and—Tor! Tor! our spears went into their bodies. See! one man fell dead here," and Bulelu pointed to a step beneath him. "Another came and fell on him, then another, and another; our drums and horns made noise, and in the forest behind, the women cried. Oh! many men were killed that day, and I saw them die—but I was only small. When the sun went down in the sky our people came with their knives, and during that night they ate many men. The ground was everywhere wet with blood, and it is bad for the feet to walk on blood, and——"

Here I interrupted Bulelu in his ghastly story. We went for a walk through rural lanes; the peaceful bleating of sheep and the joyous song of the lark

[1] Stanley's exploration of the Congo, 1877.

sounded strangely, when one's thoughts were far away in savage Africa. At length we halted by the banks of the river Colne, and while Bulelu sat, absorbed in watching the trout darting through the water, I indulged in a momentary reflection upon the probable state of mind likely to be engendered in an African youth, accustomed from earliest infancy to view such sights, and to be surrounded by such associations as those depicted by Bulelu. The killing of a wild animal in that far-off country is a far more memorable event than the slaughter of a human being. And yet there is nothing in this lad's manner suggestive of a savage disposition; on the contrary, he appears gentle and kind. His voice was soft and musical, and his bearing is respectful. The only outward token of his barbarism, apart from the tribal mark, or "dikwala," cicatrised upon his face, and his pointed teeth, was to be found in the peculiarly evasive expression of his bloodshot eyes.

"Have you many relatives?" I inquired of Bulelu, anxious to ascertain whether the superstitious scruples which prevent most Central Africans from mentioning the names of the dead would still influence him under the present circumstances.

"Four brothers, by the same mother."

"Is your father living?" Bulelu grunted twice, and shook his open hand, to imply a negative answer.

"What was your father's name?"

A Congo chief

From a bronze statue by the Author
(*Gold Medal, Paris Salon,* 1908)

Again Bulelu grunted, and replied evasively: "I was very small at the time. He was a chieftain, with many slaves, and twenty-five wives, but my mother was his only wife that bore children. An evil spirit entered his heart, and he died from sleep."

I may here mention that the fatal sleeping sickness, known to the natives as "Bokono," is very prevalent throughout the Congo country. Notwithstanding all my endeavours, I failed to elicit the name of Bulelu's father.

"Would you be satisfied to live always in this country, Bulelu? All things are good here. In your country you have but little pleasure."

Bulelu stared thoughtfully at the fish in the river, and then replied simply: "I am lonely."

Apparently, he was picturing to himself the glare of the tropical sun upon the feathery palm-trees; the dusky figures of his kinsmen, with their glistening spears; the brilliant sun-birds, hovering around the tree-blossoms; the air animated with sounds of bees and flies, and the chattering of monkeys in the great forests; the gorgeous vegetation on all sides; the abundance of life.

"When you return to your home at Bangala, you will be a great man, Bulelu. You are the first of your tribe to leave Africa," said I.

"Ha! When I go back, and I tell my people of the wonders of your country, they will say:

" 'Lukuta, koyē.' (You lie.) 'Zambi te.' (Never mind.) I will reply: 'Bikei yonsono, malami bē na' mputu. Sōla e' koye.' (All I say is true. You say I lie. It is finished. I have seen those things; you have not.)"

Here Bulelu elevated his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders, then smiled with satisfaction at the indisputable logic with which he was prepared to vanquish his sceptical kinsmen.

SOUVENIRS

SEEKING fire for my pipe, I once entered a small native hut. Within, all was dark and smoky. A smouldering fire was burning in the middle of the hut, from which I extracted the necessary ember. In front of me I perceived a crouching figure. At once I gave the ordinary native salute, but I received no reply. Extending my hand I discovered, to my horror, that the figure was a smoke-dried corpse. Emerging from the hut I met the owner, who seemed much disturbed. The figure within the hut was that of a favoured wife of his, and with great reluctance he at length explained to me, in his native idiom:

"I loved her too much to put her in the ground."

* * * * *

At San Paul de Loanda I met an aged Portuguese official, about whom an interesting story was told. It appeared that during a conversation between himself and the captain of an English man-of-war the topic turned upon their mutual recollections of the slave-trade on the coast of Africa years ago.

The Englishman in relating his experiences in this connection remarked that it was off San Paul de

Loanda, where he was a midshipman at that time, that he had witnessed a most remarkable feat of seamanship.

He was one of a party engaged in the chase of a fore-and-aft schooner which was known to be laden with slaves. The schooner escaped by weathering a certain headland, a feat which, considering the direction of the wind, gained the admiration of them all. He then entered into technical details of the incident bearing upon the direction of the wind, and in fact drew a rough diagram on the table.

The aged Portuguese, who had listened quietly, now interposed a remark: "It would have been impossible to have made that point if the direction of the wind was as you say."

The Englishman replied somewhat impatiently:

"But I remember well! I was there on the spot, as a midshipman."

"Yes," said the old Portuguese, "that may have been. But I remember well, too; I was the captain of that schooner."

* * * * *

In the spring of 1886, when I was appointed to the command of Bangala station, one of my first experiences was undergoing the ceremony of blood-brotherhood with the native chief, the celebrated Mata Bwiki.

He was a man of probably sixty years of age, nearly six feet in height, with broad shoulders, powerful

limbs, and his countenance was rendered more cruel than perhaps it otherwise would have been by the loss of one eye.

The object of this ceremony was to conform to the native custom, which estimated that blood-brotherhood was a form of cementing friendship, and a guarantee of good faith binding equally to both parties.

In the presence of a large crowd of noisy and evil-smelling people, Mata Bwiki and I seated ourselves on low wooden stools placed opposite to one another.

Silence having been commanded by a certain manner of beating the drums, the inevitable Charm Doctor, arrayed in all his grandeur, made his appearance. An incision was cut in both our right arms just below the elbow, and as the blood flowed in a tiny stream the Charm Doctor sprinkled powdered chalk and potash on the wounds, delivering the while in rapid tones an appeal to us to maintain the validity of this contract. Our arms were then rubbed together so that the flowing blood intermingled, and we were proclaimed to be brothers of one blood—this old cannibal king and I—whose interests henceforth were to be as united as our blood.

The witnesses of this ceremony expressed their agreement with the utterances of the Charm Doctor by giving way to boisterous expressions of approval. I may incidentally mention that the ceremony was for me a somewhat costly affair, for I was subse-

quently tapped by the chief, Mata Bwiki, who sought tangible proofs of our new relationship in the practical form of beads and cloth.

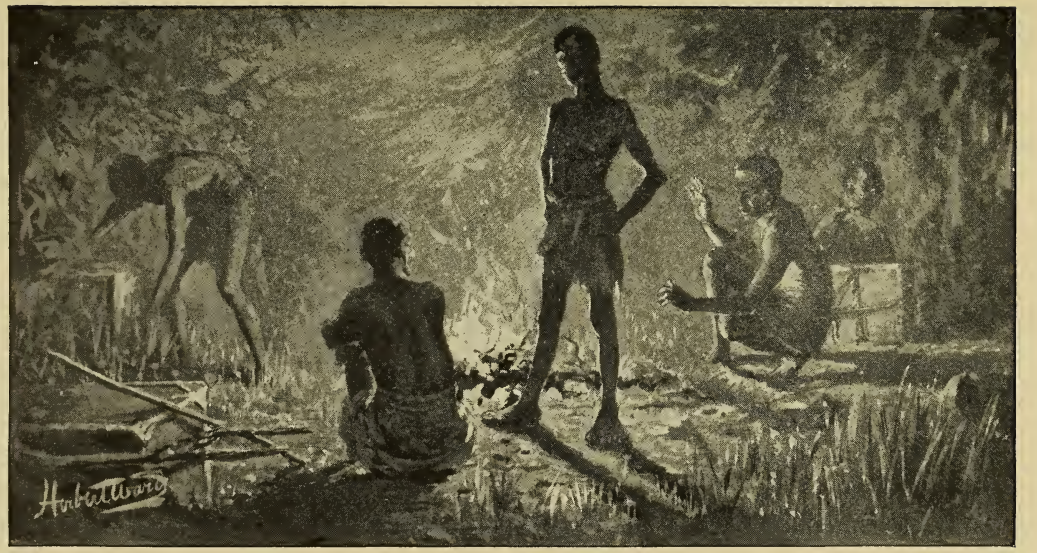
* * * * *

Whilst at Yambuya, many tragic events took place, the detailed narration of which I have dealt with elsewhere.[1] Of all the many tragedies which mark that epoch, there was one particularly pathetic incident which will always remain engraven on my mind.

It was noon. The heat was intense, and the air was filled with buzzing insects. The sun's glare was blinding. There was a sour and pungent odour, arising from the decaying refuse which lay about the outskirts of the camp. An unfortunate Zanzibari, whose legs were covered with suppurating ulcers, crawled along the ground with the aid of a stick. I expostulated with him for exposing himself to the intense heat of the sun, and offered to aid him to take shelter in a hut near by. Dropping his stick, he clasped his hands together and looked up into my face. The expression in his eyes seemed to burn into my soul.

"O master," said he, "yesterday, my friend—the friend of my youth, died; they buried him yonder; we swore never to be parted. Alikua rafiki angu sana." (He was my great friend.) And with an im-

[1] "My Life with Stanley's Rear Guard." Chatto & Windus.



Congo carriers

Drawn by the Author

ploring glance which still haunts me, he continued: "O Bwana wangu!" (Let me follow him.)

With difficulty I succeeded to some extent in soothing the man's grief, and I left him within the camp, where at least he might lie protected from the sun and the tormenting flies.

That night a terrific storm swept over the forest, one of those tornadoes which are peculiar to the tropical regions of Africa, and of the violence of which it is difficult to give an adequate description. It was my duty that night to visit the sentries, for we were living in troublous times and from experience we knew that it was upon such occasions as this that attacks were made by the ever-watchful natives who surrounded us.

Floundering along in the drenching rain, dazed by of the deafening roar of thunder and being blinded from time to time by the vivid flashes of lightning which seemed to cleave the sky close above my head, I tripped and fell over a soft body which lay across my path. Procuring a fire stick from an adjacent hut, I discovered that I had fallen over the dead body of the poor fellow who had so pitifully pleaded his sorrow to me the previous day.

He had died within the hut and his callous companions had thrown his dead body forth. With conflicting feelings of sympathy for the poor dead man, and anger towards his cold-blooded companions, I

occupied myself in burying the poor body in the same grave with that of his friend.

Nature's angry aspect passed away and the sun rose next morning in a cloudless sky, shining brightly upon the mound of freshly turned earth wherein there lay buried side by side the two Zanzibari friends.

* * * * *

Travelling with a caravan during the rainy season, I once came to a swollen torrent which baffled all our attempts to ford. We succeeded at length in felling a small tree in such a way that it lay across the river. Unfortunately it fell over the deepest part and sank some three feet below the surface. Cautiously, each man of my caravan crossed, until there remained but one native and myself.

The native stepped upon the submerged tree and felt his way carefully, balancing himself with considerable difficulty. I followed a few feet behind. The muddy water swirled past very swiftly.

About half way across, I heard a cry from the bank, and the next moment I caught sight of a heavy log floating down towards us, borne swiftly with the current. The poor native in front of me was struck upon the shoulder; he lost his balance and disappeared. A second later, while I was making every endeavour to steady myself, there appeared below me the face of the unfortunate man, distorted with

terror. Throwing his arms in the air he cried mournfully:

"Ekh—mamma!" and sank for the last time in the swirling torrent.

* * * * *

In the pioneer days of the Congo, before the era of railroads, all loads had to be carried overland by natives, and a system of manual transport became quite an institution. The loads, which were carried on their heads, were as a rule arranged in such a way as not to exceed sixty-five lbs. in weight.

The main caravan roads that lead into the interior are less than a foot wide, and this width is preserved throughout the whole length. The people using these paths are in the habit of advancing along them with a peculiar tread, bringing each foot directly in front of the other. Frequently, in following the flat bed of a valley the path winds in apparently an unnecessary manner. The explanation is simple. Weary and exhausted, carriers often died upon the path. A subsequent caravan following the same route made a détour, in the form of a loop, to avoid passing over the dead body, and in a brief space of time vegetation springing up, the former direction of the path was soon lost to view.

The progress of a caravan in the forest is frequently impeded by swollen rivers and often one found

bridges, cleverly constructed with vines and creepers, suspended from high trees on either side, requiring considerable skill to traverse. A toll was usually demanded from passing caravans by the people who had constructed the bridges.

The life of a carrier was a hard one. However, they preferred carrying a heavy load two hundred miles, over most difficult country, to steady employment day after day. The sense of freedom, to travel or to idle as they felt inclined, was more in harmony with the African nature than the routine of steady daily work.

A few handfuls of pea-nuts or cones of maize composed their provisions. They toiled all day over stony hills and waded through swamps with heavy loads upon their heads, many hours at a time without a halt.

When darkness came, they stopped for the night wherever they chanced to be. They drew their flimsy loin cloths around their shoulders, and stretched themselves before the fire, upon the bare ground to sleep. During the night, gusts of cold wind or a rainstorm would awaken them. They would stir up the fire and crouch before it with chattering teeth. At dawn they arose, yawned, stretched their stiffened limbs, rearranged their loin cloths, and with their heavy loads they started off again to cover perhaps fifteen miles without a halt.

A vine bridge, Lower Congo

Drawn by the Author

Although transport by carriers within the cataract region of the Lower Congo River is to-day a thing of the past, owing to the construction of the railway, the traveller bound for the far interior of Africa by way of the mighty water route of the Congo River had, twenty years ago, almost at the outset of his journey to undertake an arduous overland march of some three hundred miles before reaching Stanley Pool, the point whence light-draught steamers were able to convey him into the heart of the Continent. From Stanley Pool the Upper Congo, with its northern and southern affluents, affords about five thousand miles of waterway, which is navigable for small steamers of light draught.

This overland march through the Lower Congo country was rendered necessary by reason of the succession of formidable cataracts, which more or less obstruct the navigation of the Congo from Matadi—a point situated one hundred miles from the ocean—as far as Stanley Pool. It was then within this cataract region of the Lower Congo River that carriers were indispensable. Since the formation of the "Congo Independent State," up to the year 1900, which marked the inauguration of the new Congo Railway, all goods needed in the interior, from personal effects to sections and parts of steam launches, had to be transported from Matadi to Stanley Pool

upon the heads and shoulders of natives. To appreciate fully the difficulties, the individual sufferings and sacrifice of life entailed in this system of human transport it is necessary to have travelled under similar conditions.

In order to facilitate the conveyance of goods, each burden was, as already stated, carefully packed to weigh between sixty and sixty-five pounds. In cases where such weights were inexpedient, a pole was made fast to the load so that it might be suspended from the shoulders of two men walking one behind another.

The entire journey was divided into two stages, a condition rendered necessary by tribal jealousy, which prevented the two chief tribes engaged in transport from passing through each other's country.

The midway stage, where loads were transferred, was at Manyanga. The payment to each carrier who had safely delivered his load, was made by a stipulated number of yards of Manchester cotton cloth; a payment amounting in value to a sum below three shillings. This amount was cheerfully received, in full settlement of all claims, for having borne a sixty-five-pound load over a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, through a rough and hilly country. The subsequent and final stage of the overland transport was under-

taken by members of other tribes, in return for similar payment.

The recruiting of carriers, a task requiring some tact and knowledge of the native character, was accomplished among the small, scattered villages through the medium of petty chiefs and headmen, the average number recruited in each caravan varying between twenty and fifty men, in charge of a *kapita*, or headman, who was nominally responsible for the safe delivery of the goods at their destination.

The time occupied in transporting a load from Matadi to Stanley Pool was at all times an uncertain quantity. Allowing liberal time for the delays that are always incidental to African travel, it was necessary to allow two or three months to elapse before expecting its arrival. Although the actual distance traversed, somewhat less than three hundred miles, could easily be accomplished within two weeks if conditions were favourable, the system betrayed its dependence upon frail human nature: lengthy delays in village homes far from the caravan path accounted in a general way for many shortcomings. Ready and original explanations were always made to account for delay, and the ingenuity exercised in this relation must have proved no small tax upon the ready wit of the headman.

In appearance the Congo carriers were far from suggesting any abnormal degree of physique, but in

reality they possessed powers of endurance that were quite remarkable.

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My spare time in Africa was generally occupied in making notes, studying the language, and sketching native types. This latter operation was rendered somewhat difficult upon occasions, on account of the natives frequently entertaining an idea that my searching glances and mysterious markings were connected with the casting of a spell; and without any warning they would often jump up and dash away. It appeared difficult for them to understand pictorial decoration on a flat surface. When they regarded my drawings closely they had a habit of turning them upside down, a peculiarity which I attributed to an unusual change of focus in their vision, their eyes being accustomed to distant views. Not only did they find difficulty in understanding a drawing on a flat surface, but also the change of scale was a mystery to them. They all appeared to possess the sense of form, a fact which is proved by their truly artistic productions both in their weapons and in the carving of their wooden idols.

DIARY. *February* 3, 1885.

I find it quite interesting to sort over my traps and to try and remember the origin of each article in my possession. These boots poor Ingham gave me

A corner of the Author's studio

just before he was killed. This shirt I have on was one of four that I bought from a sick missionary who died soon afterwards. I gave him an elephant's tail for them. This pair of trousers was a gift from Major Parminter. They are sadly worn in the seat. My native servant tried to patch them, but he could not find any better cloth than a piece of lint from my stock of surgical bandages. So he sewed it on with the woolly side out. Lint is not much good for patches.

* * * * *

January 1, 1886.

What a relief it was when morning came, for about midnight a heavy tornado nearly blew my tent away, and everything was drenched. And after the heavy rain, elephants were heard trumpeting, and buffaloes bellowed on the mainland; and some of the people in the village blew their horns and beat their drums to frighten them off. And this is New Year's Day.

* * * * *

Marching back through the primeval forest to Yambuya, after an interview with Tippo Tib, I became detached from my caravan. I found myself beside a sandy stream and I heard elephants in the vicinity. Indeed their fresh marks were all around me. Knowing it was useless to proceed further, I determined to await the arrival of my followers.

Reclining on the bank of the stream, with my arms above my head, I gazed up into the dense panoply

of leaves overhead. After some little time I became conscious of the presence of two Pygmies sitting on a bough above me. They were motionless, and so well did the colour of their skin harmonise with the surroundings that they gave the impression almost of invisibility. It was perhaps fortunate for me that I retained sufficient presence of mind to speak softly. But I received no reply to my gentle salutation, and before I had realised it, they had edged their way along the branch and disappeared.

* * * * *

On my passage home from Africa I travelled on board a Portuguese steamer. When within about twelve hours' steaming of the island of San Thomé, which lies on the Equator, off Gaboon, we sighted a capsized boat. The weather had been rough and a heavy sea was still running. We lowered one of our boats, which proceeded with difficulty towards the derelict. Our astonishment was great when we found that two Africans were clinging to it, Soon we had them on board, two forlorn men, who were quite exhausted. After a little rest and nourishment we succeeded in obtaining their story. They were both slaves belonging to a cocoa plantation. Three days before they had attempted to escape from their cruel bondage in an open boat. Having no knowledge whatever of their bearings, they rowed, with true African unreasoning confidence, in the direction of

A Congo carrier

Drawn by the Author

the rising sun. They were caught by the storm, their boat was capsized, and they had passed three days clinging to the bottom of the boat without food of any description.

Their survival was the more remarkable from the fact that the vicinity of San Thomé is one of the most shark-infested portions of the coast.

We naturally felt great pity for them and they were the recipients of various presents, including a very handsome clasp-knife.

That same night there was a disturbance between these two men. It was discovered that the man who had received the clasp-knife was deliberately attempting to kill his comrade, and had already inflicted some deep flesh wounds. The trouble arose from a spirit of envy. One man had been allotted a blue blanket and the other a red blanket, and the man with the clasp-knife was envious of his companion's blanket, which he preferred to his own. It was a deadly quarrel over a mere question of colour.

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With regard to the black followers of the Emin Relief Expedition, we have no complete record of the number of deaths, owing to the difficulty of differentiating desertions, but the mortality among them was fearful. Many of them were deserving of the very highest praise for their truly heroic courage. It must be borne in mind that their presence in the ex-

pedition was in many cases involuntary, inasmuch as they were either slaves belonging to Arab masters in Zanzibar, or were compelled by force of adverse circumstances in the form of debt or other difficulties to enlist.

The Zanzibari porter is in the majority of instances a faithful, patient servant—who will suffer severe privation without further remark than a whining plea of hunger—"Nzaa sana bwana!"—as he tightens the belt around his waist. He is paid at the average rate of a dollar a week, payable upon his return to Zanzibar. He is not actuated by high motives, and he does not appreciate the glory of publicity. His chief care is to preserve his life, and his only ambition is to return home to Zanzibar, where he may enjoy a brief spell of leisure.

Notwithstanding his material view of life the Zanzibari porter displays at times a rare amount of noble devotion and loyalty. These qualities were indeed sorely tried during their service in the Emin Relief Expedition, and many are the spots upon the route where the poor exhausted men fell out and died. Remaining with me always is the recollection of their patient sufferings, which for true pathos can scarcely be surpassed.

* * * * *

REFLECTIONS

The remarkable similarity which exists between human nature and animal life in the great forest region of Central Africa is a most interesting subject and one which, to my knowledge, has not hitherto been touched upon.

In the rivers that flow through the forest regions, hippopotami abound, with their heavy bodies, short necks, and stunted legs. Chimpanzees and other large apes who are denizens of this forest region present the same characteristics, inasmuch as their bodies are abnormally large in proportion to their legs. Certain birds of the forest suggest a similar tendency. Likewise—and here is the point of interest—the natives living in these same regions are often remarkable for their stunted legs, abnormally long bodies, and short, thick necks. Outside this forest region towards the Soudan, there flourish gazelles and various other animals with long slender legs. So also we find the natives—the Niam Niam for example—with abnormally long legs and short bodies.

The remarkable provision of nature in giving to her African people the skin-colour which harmonises

so extraordinarily with natural surroundings, no matter what they may be, is a definite and interesting fact. The African's skin, no matter how great the heat of the sun may be, is always cool. The black skin with its large pores and abundance of oily matter seems to be possessed of certain qualities which are altogether wanting in our white skin.

* * * * *

The climate of the Congo region of Central Africa will always prove a barrier to individual effort on the part of Europeans. It is true that they may endure the life for a few years, but it is always with diminishing strength. That enormous low-lying, forest-clad land, with its great heat and vast extent of obstructed rivers, can never become the permanent home of any other race but the Africans.

The African savage, standing in his forest surroundings, appears natural and in his true element.

As the country, so are the people, the most primitive forms being found in the almost impenetrable depths of the forest. So awe-inspiring in fact is this great forest, that you almost fear to hear the sound of your own voice. Within its depths, as though by instinct, one speaks in whispers. To raise one's voice becomes an effort.

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What a land of strange and fatal enchantment is this heart of Africa!

Native fighting knife, Mangalla
In the collection of the Author

What an inexpressible charm there is in picking one's way through localities that have never before been visited by a white man; seeing strange faces and hearing strange languages! To be alone where nature and human nature are alike in a crude state; to be far away in the midst of a primitive people whose nature is wild and uncultivated—people who are simple, savage in ignorance, timid, and ever fearing for their lives. To be the one delegate as it were of the modern world, in the midst of countless thousands of human beings whose minds are the minds of primitive mankind. To live free from all the petty conventionalities and ramifications of civilisation; to be able to forego all the artificial necessities of our modern home life; to give free play to that strong, inward craving for true natural liberty—these are some of the subtle attractions that inoculate every man of African experience: these are the charms which cast their spell upon all African travellers, and which have held so many of them fascinated for the remainder of their lives.

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It has been my experience that the longer one lives with Africans, the more one grows to love them. Prejudices soon vanish. The black skin loses even something of its unpleasant characteristics, for one knows that it covers such a very human heart.

Human nature is always the same; it does not change. We all know that there are certain qualities indigenous to the human mind in general. These identical qualities which we share with Africans should surely be regarded more than they are at present, as bonds of sympathy and conciliation in uniting men's affection for one another.

That "untaught nature has no principles" is a familiar axiom. In the case of the Congo savages, one is often too ready to estimate them as beings of nature, untaught, a degraded race, without conscience or even scruples. True it is that so they appear, for they have none of those finer feelings or sentiments which are known to us as mercy or charity—but the result of intercourse with even the lowest types, affords abundant testimony to their being in possession of an instinctive conscience. It is also true that they are naturally cruel, that they rob and murder, and even eat the bodies of their fellow man; but the fact must not be forgotten that they are not conscious of wrong in so doing. A Congo savage seldom does that which he feels intuitively to be wrong.

Living as we do, generation after generation, in a condition of continuous progression, surrounded by so much that is complicated and artificial in our lives, it is difficult for us really to understand what life

means to the Congo savage who dwells in harmony with wild and unrestricted nature.

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In view of the growth of modern tendencies in relation to questions of socialism and economy, much that is instructive may be gathered from a study of existing conditions of the life of the Congo savage. In Central Africa we have a complete object-lesson before us of the ultimate results of life under conditions of equality. It would seem that the social state of equality which is observed by primitive mankind is now the aim and ambition of most highly civilised communities. Social equality appears to be the first and last ambition in the history of mankind.

In Central Africa the spirit of enterprise among the people is restrained, not to say crushed, by the fear of exciting the envy and cupidity of their fellows. As an instance, one who builds a better house than his neighbour's will have his house pulled down forthwith. Then again if a man exerts himself to amass native riches, he courts the enmity of all his fellows and becomes doomed to an early death. Ambition to excel, which is such a natural attribute of human nature, receives no encouragement in Central Africa. Coinciding with this state of life, we find the people living in a state of anarchy and ignorance, without a constitution, without a history, and even without definitely estab-

lished habitations. They lack even the ambition of conquest and are content to pass their lives in a state of mental atrophy. So much for equality.

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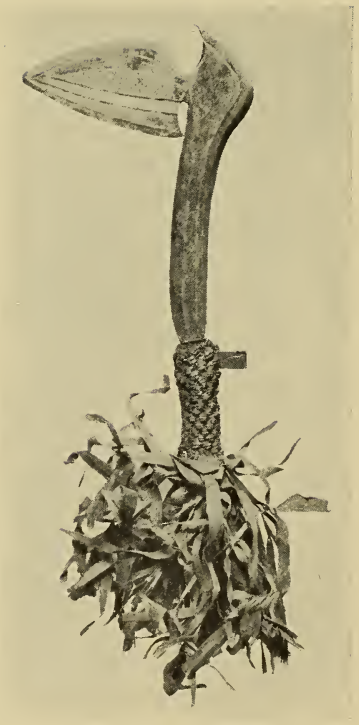
A great deal could be written of the everyday annoyances which are common to the lives of Europeans in Central Africa. Exposure to the powerful sun by day, and to the cold fogs by night, with a meagre diet—sometimes so meagre that it can scarcely be termed monotonous—tries even the stoutest constitution. The mind also undergoes a constant strain, for one's followers need incessant watching, supervision, and direction. Often a feeling of utter loneliness comes over one, a feeling of being hopelessly far away. The eyes grow weary of the monotonous colour; the sickly odours of decaying vegetation, and the ever-present pungent smell of African bodies are not refreshing to the nostrils; as for one's ears, they grow utterly weary of the incessant babble of human voices in the villages.

Mosquitoes in that country are as actively aggressive by day as they are by night. They are a source of continual irritation to one's nerves, not to speak of their poisonous injections, or the ulcerous sores which frequently follow their bites.

One's slumbers are greatly disturbed by the invisible midges, noxious little insects who breakfast

Mementos



Native fighting knife, Aruimi
In the collection of the Author

upon one's body between two and three o'clock in the morning.

Then there is the burrowing flea, commonly known as the jigger. This pest eats into the flesh, affecting principally one's feet, and is extremely expeditious in hatching large families therein. Natives suffer a great deal from these insects, for they neglect the wound, and as a result they frequently die of blood-poisoning. On the sea-coast at Cabinda I was shown the decaying hull of a "fore-and-aft" schooner which is reputed to have been the means of introducing "jiggers" into Africa. This vessel, bound from the West Indies, discharged its earth ballast containing a quantity of these burrowing fleas, upon the beach at Cabinda, and the pests were conveyed thence inland in the feet of caravan natives. It is to be noted that jiggers are never to be met with except on the caravan routes.

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One of the charms of travelling light in Africa lies in the fact that having but little to lose there is little fear of losing it. There is also food for reflection in the fact of being in a country with no money currency: although apt to feel most other things out there, one never felt poor.

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With regard to rubber, which has become the main feature of the exportations from the Congo, until

within recent years it was only used by the Congo natives to put on the ends of their drum-sticks. It would be interesting to have their reflections upon the extraordinary desire of the Europeans for rubber. They must imagine that the manufacture of drum-sticks in Europe assumes vast proportions indeed, to call for such quantities of rubber as are exported from their country.

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Although a cook was always one of the most important members of one's travelling equipment, it is not to be inferred that provisions were so varied and plentiful as to demand particularly high-class culinary skill. The chief qualification of a cook depended upon his quick wits. Comparatively little difficulty was ever experienced in the manner or method in which food was cooked. The main question always hinged upon finding something to cook, and that was the all-important part of the cook's duties.

STORIES OF WHITE MEN

In the early days, that is to say in the interim between Stanley's discovery of the course of the Congo River, and the formation of the Congo Independent State, the pioneer work of the Congo was carried out under more or less difficult circumstances. Men of various nationalities who had all signed contracts in Brussels for three years' service arrived upon the scene and were in due course delegated to various points inland, with directions to make treaties with natives and to establish themselves as well as they could.

Such conditions as these naturally afforded subjects that were rich in life's drama. There was pathos, and some humour. Frequently tragedy, and always more or less suffering.

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Mysterious yarns they were that the natives told of the behaviour of a new-comer. He was a Swede, with blue eyes, mild expression, a gentle voice, and a

kind heart—the sort of man with whom one could associate no idea of evil. He had not been in Africa very long, but it was evident, from day to day, that his health was breaking down and that his whole system was becoming undermined.

The natives said that by night, when all was hushed, our Scandinavian colleague was in the habit of creeping through the bushes and disappearing in a hole that he had dug in the ground.

It was not long before the mystery was revealed. Said he:

"I feel it my duty to tell you all of the secret discovery I have made, the discovery of gold! I have sacks full of gold in my hut yonder. So far as I am concerned personally, my fortune is now assured. I think that the time has come when I ought to make my discovery known. I will show you my mine."

Trembling with excitement, he led the way to the fatal spot.

The subsequent development of this incident took a tragic turn. Upon learning the hard truth, that what he had considered to be gold was merely mica (which certainly bears some resemblance to the precious metal), the shock to his emotions was too severe for his overwrought brain.

The mine was no longer a mine. Henceforth it was marked by a little mound of earth and a rough-

E. G. Glavé W. G. Parminter Roger Casement

Herbert Ward

hewn cross. Our poor Swedish friend had dug his own grave.

* * * * *

The first name I would mention of all the European pioneers who were connected with the opening up of the Congo is the name of my friend and companion since 1884, Roger Casement. Imagine a tall, handsome man, of fine bearing; thin, mere muscle and bone, a sun-tanned face, blue eyes and black curly hair. A pure Irishman he is, with a captivating voice and a singular charm of manner. A man of distinction and great refinement, high-minded and courteous, impulsive and poetical. Quixotic perhaps some would say, and with a certain truth, for few men have shown themselves so regardless of personal advancement.

The world is familiar with Consul Casement's Report, which constituted the official indictment of misrule in the Congo Independent State. Casement's Report has had a far-reaching effect; it was in a large measure due to his representations to the British Government that the present change of conditions has been brought about, whereby the Belgian nation have taken over the Congo Independent State.

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A popular man was X. the carpenter. In the fulfilment of his duties he rendered important service.

The relative comfort enjoyed by the Governor and his *personnel* was due in a large measure to his handiwork, for he constructed their habitations, furniture, and all sorts of useful articles.

During his term of service, which extended over a period of three years, he worked faithfully and well.

His conversation by day and his dreams by night were of his home and family, and the prospect of his departure cheered him in his work.

As a special favour to the Governor, when his term of service had expired, he reluctantly agreed to remain three weeks longer, in order to complete certain work. It was arranged that he should take the next steamer after the one by which he had been originally due to sail.

Standing on the wharf he saw the little launch which should have borne him homewards cast off and drift down river to join the ocean steamer.

And that little launch must have taken his heart away with it, for he died before the next boat left.

* * * * *

Upon arriving, footsore and weary, in a native village, and anxious to camp there for the night, a traveller was persuaded by the people to proceed further.

"We have a madman," said they, "and he is very fierce. If you remain here he will surely come and kill you in the night."

In spite of the warning, the traveller decided to remain. Some hours afterwards he was awakened by an uproar. The madman had cleared the entire village of its inhabitants, and subsequently passed the remainder of the night in friendly conversation with the traveller.

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In the early days, when white men first went into the far interior, the natives concluded that the boots they wore formed part of themselves, and it became a legend among them that white men had webbed feet.

* * * * *

Captain Bailey was one of the most charming, equal-tempered companions I ever met. He was a good sportsman, and reliable from every point of view. The only occasion upon which any rupture ever appeared to disturb the harmony of our perfect friendship happened at the Luima River, where we had camped together in one tent.

In the early morning we had arranged a shooting expedition, Captain Bailey taking the left bank of the River and myself the right. We started soon after daybreak.

It was my good fortune to find a herd of buffalo quietly browsing on a plain, and good fortune followed me to the extent of bagging the leading bull of the herd. It being a very hot day, I afterwards retired to a shady grove and enjoyed a peaceful siesta.

Later on, on my way back to camp, feeling thirsty, I encountered a native by great good fortune, carrying a large calabash of palm-wine.

"What have you in your calabash?" "Only water," he replied. "Water," said I; "that's what I need." And I enjoyed a deep draught of fresh palm-wine!

A little further on I passed through a village where the evening meal was in course of preparation. The people were hospitable, and I shared their meal of succulent maize and roasted pea-nuts. Arriving in camp about sundown, I changed my clothes, took a bath, and seated in front of the camp fire I smoked a peaceful pipe, wondering what had become of Bailey.

The sky suddenly became overcast, and all was dark. An ominous rumble in the distance betokened the approach of a tropical storm.

During the next half-hour rain fell in torrents, and the temperature dropped many degrees.

At the conclusion of the storm Captain Bailey appeared. His usual cheeriness had deserted him. He was gloomy and angry, and very short in his replies.

It appears that he had tramped the whole day in the hot sun over a very rough country where there were many rocks, without sighting game of any kind. He had sustained a fall, broken his pipe, split his only

pair of breeches, bruised himself in many places, and had been caught in the storm, drenched to the skin, lost his way, and had passed the entire day without food.

The following morning, however, his voice was as cheery as usual, and the inequality of our respective adventures of the previous day became less a subject of tragedy.

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An aged *savant* on his way into the interior, when crossing a small river on the shoulders of a native, was accidentally precipitated into the water. After being carried down some little distance by the current, the poor old man clutched a rock and cried piteously:

"What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do?"

"Why, get out, you silly old fool and dry your clothes," replied his practical-minded companion, who was seated complacently smoking on the opposite bank.

* * * * *

An Englishman who was *en route* for the Congo was shipwrecked on the West Coast of Africa, and was picked up by a returning vessel and taken back to Liverpool.

He started out again, this time on board the ill-fated steamer *Corisco*, and was shipwrecked a second time on the African coast, losing all his effects.

His third attempt was more successful, and he reached the Congo. A month later he died from fever.

* * * * *

A young Swede was invalided home from the Congo. After an examination the doctors told him that he was in a bad way, and gave him only six months to live. Far from being discouraged, our friend decided to obtain as much pleasure out of this limited period of his life as was possible with the means at his disposal.

At the end of six months his health was re-established. He however, had spent all his money. As he himself remarked, when telling the story:

"I even selled my vatch."

* * * * *

X. was a Fin, an engineer, a cheery little soul. I remember an oily skin was one of his characteristics. It seemed almost as though he had impregnated himself with the grease he used for his engines. When his term of service on the Congo came to an end he started home in the gayest of spirits. It was not long however before we received him back in our midst. It appears that upon arriving in Brussels in mid-winter to be paid off, he sent to his far northern home for his overcoat. While awaiting its arrival he spent all his money. When the coat arrived it was of but little use to him. Being without money he

was unable to proceed home, and so he re-enlisted and returned again to Africa.

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In the early days of the Congo, European provisions for the white men were sent from Brussels.

Bottles of vinegar and cognac used to be hermetically sealed in tins. Tea, sugar, and other perishable articles were frequently sent in paper bags!

Later on provisions were sent out to us by the firm of Crosse & Blackwell, and one sometimes heard them alluded to by the Belgians as the stores of "Black and Cross Very Well."

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Marching up-country a party of five or six Swedish officers, who had but recently arrived in Africa, were all suddenly taken ill.

It appeared at first as though they were suffering from ptomaine poisoning; but the tin containing the suspicious matter which they had consumed in the form of soup still retained its legibly printed label: "Finest English Lard!"

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Surgeon-Major Parke possessed a strong element of that resistless Irish cheerfulness that was his by right of birth. A passing little illustration of this latter trait may be gathered from his remarks when rendered dangerously ill in Central Africa by an acute attack of fever:

"Ah! well, I've one consolation if I do die—I'm the first Irishman that's ever been in these wild parts!"

* * * * *

Poor Glave, one of the most promising of all the band of early Congo pioneers, used to tell how he once objected to buying lumps of half-putrid fish from the natives, on account of its smell.

"Yes," replied they, "but you don't eat the smell!"

* * * * *

Captain Deane expressed a great desire to learn the Congo language, and so we sat one day together, I, for my part, endeavouring to supply him with as useful a vocabulary as I could. His mind was concentrated upon elephant-hunting, and he couldn't get beyond the phrase: "Where are they?"

* * * * *

My fellow passengers aboard ship during my voyage out to the Congo were mostly West African traders. They formed a community by themselves, and were remarkable in their observation of numerous points of West Coast etiquette, and they were also very particular as regards the cleanliness of their white clothes.

When we reached Bonny the ship was visited by a notable personage, Mary Ann, the Bonny washerwoman. She was a particularly fine type of a West African. Her face was wreathed in smiles and her body was round and full, and bore testimony to the possession of both vigour and health.

The caravan path at Mpalaballa

Drawn by the Author

She was a well-known character. Whilst she became an object of chaff and banter with my fellow passengers, and in fact with the majority of the ship's company, her assistants busied themselves in collecting the entire laundry of the ship.

As there seemed but little chance of engaging the services of Mary Ann, I accepted the offer of a tall, serious-looking negro who faithfully promised that my washing should be delivered on board the ship that night by sundown.

Being a stranger to the place and to the people, I planned to pass my day wandering about the native town of Bonny with my sketch-book. By noon I found myself on the outskirts of the town; here the main native path led through a swamp. Plodding through the swamp, with the water nearly up to my armpits, I reached the opposite shore and was saluted by sounds of song and laughter. Having realised a sense of loneliness by this time, I found something particularly cheerful in listening to the merry voices ahead.

Entering the gates of a compound, I found myself in the midst of Mary Ann's washing establishment, among some twenty or thirty young negresses, all busily engaged in washing the clothes which had been collected from the ship and which they cleaned by the aid of very vigorous measures, flapping them down on the stones and generally knocking them to pieces.

I was received very kindly, and as reference was made to the excessive heat of the day, I took the hint and suggested that the company might be disposed to refresh themselves at my expense. This idea seemed to meet with general approval, and during the remainder of the afternoon I was regaled with great good-humour and witnessed a series of native dances which were distinctly free and characteristic of people who were unfettered by conventionality. As the day waned I bade adieu to my joyous friends, and with empty pockets I made my way back to the ship, where at dinner-time I found myself the sole occupant of the dining saloon; the remainder of the passengers and the ship's officers being ashore as guests of the different traders. I may mention that I also found my clothes which had been washed and returned according to promise.

Early the following morning the anchor was hove short, and as the ship was swinging I observed the chief steward engaged in a somewhat animated discussion with the captain. From a word here and there, I gathered that Mary Ann had failed to bring back the ship's washing.

Anger and discontent increased as the passengers came on deck and learned the true state of affairs, but the captain was deaf to expostulation and would listen to no arguments for delaying the departure of the ship. Slowly we drifted down with the tide, and

presently passed an open space among the palm-trees. There, grouped at the water's edge, we recognised Mary Ann surrounded by washerwomen all cheerfully waving "Good-bye" to us, swinging round their heads the very clothes which should have been on board our vessel!

* * * * *

X. was a queer character. He was known among us as a light-hearted, devil-may-care fellow, fond of action, treating his mission lightly, and trying to extract whatever fun and humour there was to be obtained out of life.

He was alone on his station, which was situated far away from the base of supplies, and which was also a long distance from the caravan road. As the weary months passed he felt a yearning for companionship. But no one ever passed by.

One day there arrived at headquarters a special message from our friend asking for immediate aid. He stated that he was in imminent risk of being attacked by the natives.

Forthwith an expedition was despatched to his assistance. Naturally, coming from headquarters, the expedition was well-equipped with provisions, and under the leadership of three white men.

Upon arrival they were met by X. at the gate of the entrance to the fortified station. He informed them that an attack might be expected at any moment,

and as an indication of the unsettled condition of the country he called their attention to the distant booming of drums.

Meanwhile the expedition took up their quarters, posted sentinels, and awaited developments.

Several days passed without incident, save the intermittent booming of drums during the day, and the occasional beacon fires which flared from the surrounding hill-tops by night.

Between times X. certainly enjoyed to the full the relative gaiety afforded by the advent of the relief expedition, and the fresh stock of provisions which they brought.

Upon the fifth day (I may incidentally mention that the provisions of the relieving force were by this time sufficiently exhausted) the station was visited by two of the leading chiefs with their retinue. X., being the only man of the party with any knowledge whatever of the native language, harangued the natives in truly dramatic style, and later on explained to the leader of the relieving force that the chiefs had tendered their submission, and that now all danger was at an end. With effusive farewells the chiefs retired.

The following day the relieving force withdrew, leaving behind them the remnants of their stock of provisions.

Rumour has it that the whole affair was prearranged. Be that as it may, I have reason to know

that our friend X. enjoyed this temporary break in the monotony of his station life.

* * * * *

It was in the early days of the opening up of the Congo, and at the little station of Lulungu several white men had forgathered from the different parts of the country. There were eight of us in all, and we represented five different nationalities.

A day or two previously a stock of provisions had arrived, comprising among other things a few demi-johns of Portuguese red wine. The dinner that night was a lengthy one, tongues wagged and brains grew heated. By midnight things had developed into a carousal, and the air was rent with drunken songs and shouts. It was the rainy season and the night air was hot and heavy, foreboding the approach of a storm.

During a temporary lull I went forth alone, to seek fresh air. Never shall I forget my experience, for I caught the strains of a familiar hymn tune chanted by little children of the Mission in the valley below. As if in gentle rebuke to us they sang:

Wonso wuna usatu a mbikulu,
Wonso wonso bika Keza—

(Whosoever will—'tis life for evermore,
Whosoever will, may come.)

* * * * *

E. J. Glave was one of my close friends on the Congo. A strong character, he was humane and he

was brave. He was a square man, as men understand the expression. His sense of humour was very keen. He possessed an extraordinary power of mimicry and he had a good ear for music.

He was just twenty when I first knew him in Africa. He was quick to learn the native language, and so remarkable was his sense of sound that it was difficult to distinguish his voice from that of the natives. This quality, combined with his apt gestures and natural sympathy for Africans, made him unusually popular among natives.

Always in high spirits, it was a positive delight to be in his company; he sang well, particularly light negro melodies, accompanying himself upon an old, worn banjo, the parchment and strings of which were of his own manufacture.

The spirit of adventure was very strong in him, and he was perpetually in action. He had a large experience of big-game shooting, and more than once his steady nerve preserved his life from a charging buffalo.

We were near of an age. We both shared the same sympathetic views regarding the natives. Another bond that drew us together was our mutual love of adventure. We were neither of us prompted to seek either riches or fame. Entirely regardless of the future, we enjoyed every moment of the present, although I must admit that some moments were vastly more enjoyable than others.

After serving six years in two periods on the Congo, Glave returned to England in 1889.

The methods of Belgian rule on the Congo met with Glave's disapproval, and he turned his attention to new fields of adventure. He travelled in Alaska, and I believe I am right in stating that his name will survive among those of the early pioneers of the Yukon.

The glamour of Africa, however, was in his heart. Ice and snow and the search for gold were not to Glave's taste. Returning to Africa in 1893, Glave entered the continent from the east, and with no companions except a small party of natives, he penetrated to the little known regions around Lake Bangweolo, and visited the spot where Dr. Livingstone died. During his journey he experienced many hardships, and was an eye-witness of many horrors in connection with slave caravans.

His journey across Africa completed, and his effects already stowed on board a homeward-bound steamer from the Congo, Glave, stricken by fever, died on the eve of sailing.

He was a good man, and he died among good men, in the Baptist mission station of Tunduwa.

* * * * *

Probably under no other circumstances could men become better acquainted with the various phases of each other's character than when campaigning to-

gether in the depths of a barbarous country. Under such conditions the true disposition of a comrade soon becomes apparent. A man's courage or tendency towards faint-heartedness are soon betrayed. Living for an uncertain period in a condition of semi-starvation and constant worry proves a man's mettle in the quickest and surest way.

When, added to such physical discomfort and privation, we consider the influence of a malignant climate, which affects the spleen and liver, which racks the frame with burning fever or exhausting dysentery, which dispels sleep and fills the disordered mind with morbid thoughts, and which engenders violent angry passions, it may be understood that no man can act a part: all men must perforce reveal their latent qualities, good and bad.

The period of trials and sufferings at length comes to a conclusion with the home-coming; the remnants of the worn-out kit are thrust aside; the scene changes, and where all was squalid, dark, and unwholesome, all becomes fresh and pleasing. It is a complete transition from the condition of physical misery to that of mental enjoyment; and in this latter experience we find the details of African life gradually fading away, leaving a strong, clear line-drawing in place of the former complete picture. This powerful outline of past experiences becomes still more deeply defined as years pass by and when death

removes those with whom one shared the fortunes of the past.

* * * * *

As an episode bearing upon the remarkable fascination that African life, with all its disadvantages, exercises over the minds of those who have once tasted it, I may quote the sentiments of De Kuyper, who, after spending twenty years on the coast of Africa, started for home, to visit the land of his youth. Arriving after a few days at San Thomé, an island on the Equator, lying off Gaboon, he said:

"I want to go back. I've had enough of Europe."

* * * * *

The Congo pioneers were, as I have already stated, men representing many different European nationalities. The natives, who gathered in groups by the wayside to take their first view of white men, gazed in utter bewilderment upon the passing caravans, under the command of flaxen-haired Northerners and swarthy Southerners.

They were an extraordinary lot, these young would-be explorers of all nations. The strange episodes, the picturesque romances, or the shady transactions that may have been associated with their past lives, were known only to the individuals themselves, and, as if by a mutual understanding, no personal questions were ever asked.

In those early days the forerunners of civilisation—if they might so be styled—entered among the Pagan negroes full of high ambition and enthusiasm. Later on, one saw German barons of ancient lineage, Italian nobles, and distinguished Austrian officers, building mud huts and planting maize for sustenance.

It was always the same story: each man's calendar showed the days marked off with scrupulous care, and the one topic of conversation alike among men of all nationalities was of the departure from Africa and the return to the comforts of civilisation.

As the weary months passed, many sickened and died, preys to privation and fever. A few of the hardiest survived long enough to complete their term of service and to embark for home. But they were generally jaundiced and broken in health.

In the meantime other consignments of adventurers would arrive, and there continued a perpetual immigration.

Most of these men were in the prime of life, and the majority were physically fit. But the mortality was great, far greater perhaps than has been recorded in the opening up of any new country.

It is a sad reflection when one thinks of the numbers who have fallen by the way. But very few indeed of the original band are now alive. Among the many hundreds of men I associated with, I very much doubt if at this date there remain twelve survivors.

Photograph by Rowland Ward, Ltd.

Congo arms

In the Author's collection

One thinks of the loving parents who endeavoured to picture to themselves the romance of life in Africa: the mighty Congo River, picturesque and stately savages, graceful palms and luxuriant vegetation, all illumined by a bright tropical sun. In how many homes there still exists a cherished packet of letters, the envelopes marked "Central Africa, stamps not procurable;" written with pale, diluted ink upon different sized sheets of paper, blotted and blurred, full of puzzling native names of places not marked on the map; occasional erratic sentences and incoherent allusions to unknown persons and events. Whole pages written in a spirit of expectancy and hopefulness of returning home.

Of the graves of my former companions, just mounds of earth, all over-grown by tall rank grass and brambles; there is no one there to distinguish them.

* * * * *

One of the most agreeable memories of my life in Central Africa is the recollection of the kindness of the missionaries. Careless and thoughtless, I was at first touched by their ready hospitality; the pot of jam and the tin of sweet biscuits, rare luxuries they always were, tasted doubly sweet when eaten in their company, in the restful and wholesome atmosphere of their African home. Later on, my nature grew more serious, and I regarded the missionaries from

another standpoint. I understood them better and I experienced an ever-increasing feeling of respect for those men who devoted their lives to the Africans. They were, all of them that I met, good men; gentle and kind and ever ready to sacrifice themselves for others. Their influence was all for good. This brief tribute to the memory of such men seems absurdly inadequate and ill expressed, but it is nevertheless sincere and intended to express my gratitude and my respect.

CONGO CHARACTERISTICS

Central Africa may be regarded as a vast table-land slightly depressed towards the centre, and from periods more or less remote the three great river systems, as represented by the Nile, the Congo, and the Zambesi, by the constant wearing away of their river-beds have drained this region, which we know was once a vast lake, or succession of lakes, intersected by forest-clad islands.

Reference to this inland sea, as it may be termed, was made as long ago as 500 B. C. by Herodotus.

The mouth of the Congo River was discovered in 1485 by Diego Cam, a Portuguese navigator, whilst in search of a sea route to the Indies. But nothing whatever was known of the course of this mighty river until the year 1877—the series of formidable cataracts commencing some hundred miles from its mouth having proved an insurmountable obstacle to its exploration.

The great problems of Africa have, within the last sixty years, changed their form; the geographical problems which puzzled former generations have

now all been solved, and the new problems bear upon the development and regeneration of its population.

In this vast and densely populated country there is much diversity in the mental condition and general mode of living prevalent among native tribes inhabiting different localities; but one is more particularly impressed by the wide dissimilarity in disposition existing between the inhabitants of the open country of the Lower Congo and the forest dwellers of the far interior.

It is difficult at the present time to definitely account for these variations of character, owing to our absolute lack of knowledge of native history; but having as an accounted fact that they are not aboriginal, we must naturally infer that admixture with former races, combined with the phenomena of environment, represent the main elements of influence to which these variations of character are to be attributed. Typically, the present native inhabitants of the Congo region, to which I refer, are closely allied to the negro race. The distinctive features however consist in a warm-toned skin, and small, well-proportioned though slightly flat hands and feet. But the prominent brow-ridge, the flat, broad nose and everted lips, small eyes, long arms and bowed legs, in more or less decided forms, are characteristic, although in many individual cases the negro type is in no way

Photograph by Rowland Ward, Ltd.

Congo arms

In the Author's collection

pronounced. The men's hair appears to be more luxuriant than the women's, and it is very rare to see any hair upon the face of the Congo natives. Their eyes are generally bloodshot, a peculiarity that is probably due to their sleeping in smoke-filled huts.

Among the native tribes of the Congo basin there exists no history of any kind. There is no written language, no tradition of the past, and no indication of an attempt to perpetuate any epoch in their lives by means of earth or stone erections. Thus confronted with insurmountable difficulties in the way of tribal classification, language is the only guide we have to depend upon in determining racial affinities. The languages spoken by the native inhabitants of the Congo basin are nearly all of the same grammatical structure, one of the most remarkable features of which is the alliterative concord. The various tribes of the Congo are for the most part allied to the great Bantu group, the most extensive of all African racial divisions.

The country of the Lower Congo, and more particularly of the cataract region, is composed of low hill ranges, savannahs, and fertile valleys; the forest growth is principally confined to the alluvial deposits of the ravines. The seasons are well defined, and rain is plentiful.

There are certain places on the Lower Congo where the glimpses of tangled coils of virgin wood-

land are beautiful in the extreme, fully realising the ideal pictures of tropical forest grandeur.

The natives reside in small unprotected villages, which are generally situated on hill-tops, and exist under the nominal government of petty chiefs. Few villages contain five hundred inhabitants; but as all the crests of the hills in some localities are covered with the neatly constructed thatched huts of the natives, the population throughout the area is considerable.

The majority of the natives of these tribes are in a condition of serfdom, a condition arising principally from mutual indebtedness. In disposition they are mild-tempered and inoffensive. Cannibalism is an unknown practice among the inhabitants of the Lower Congo. The trading instinct is largely developed, and is exercised in bartering produce and commodities in the local markets. They are not warlike.

The prevailing characteristic of the Lower Congo tribes is superstition. Their lives and minds are swayed by charm-doctors, who possess an almost infinite power over the people. These charm-doctors are invariably shrewd and crafty men, exceeding their kinsmen in mental capacity. They exercise supreme power in the settlement of all local matters. Superstition is, of course, an indigenous and strongly pronounced element in African human nature, but the natives of the Lower Congo region are wholly

Photograph by Row'and Ward, Ltd.

Congo implements

In the Author's collection

and absolutely devoted to fetichism in all its many phases. Their life's object is the appeasing and propitiating of the Evil Spirit, and the persuading of all natural powers to their good.

The Lower Congo tribes are not progressive; their spirit of progress being curbed and crushed by the ever-present fear of exciting the cupidity of the charm-doctors. The ferocious impulse is almost absent; only upon the occasion of their fanatical passions being aroused do they display cruel savage instincts.

They are attached to their villages, their plantations, and their markets. This attachment and love of possession deters them from risking their lives and property by waging war upon their neighbours. They are satisfied with a rural pastoral life, in a beautiful fertile country. Relieved from the anxiety of fighting for existence and lacking the ambition of conquest, they are contented to live in idleness.

After following the Congo River six hundred miles into the interior, we find the country consists mainly of a vast forest swamp. In these regions beyond the cataracts of the Lower Congo, as far as Stanley Falls, the land is seldom more than a few feet above the level of the river. Through this primeval forest swamp flows the great Congo River, attaining an occasional breadth of many miles, impeded

in places by sand-banks and shallows, its broad surface being thickly veined by narrow wooded islets. The wildest aspect of nature is here displayed, in the form of tropical exuberance of foliage, beneath the canopy of which all is sunless gloom and damp decay. Immense trees with dense foliage, draped from the topmost boughs with orchilla weed and fungi, and graceful creepers hanging in festoons, animated sometimes by troops of gay chattering monkeys, at other times silent and still except for the hoarse croaking of frogs or the cracking of undergrowth, when a ponderous elephant passes by. The rainfall is excessive, and there is no dry season. Torrential rains and tropical tornadoes sweep over these regions at frequent intervals. The intense heat, due to the bi-annual vertical sun acting upon this gigantic area of vegetation, constitutes an ever-fermenting hotbed, which is charged with unwholesome noxious vapours, and teems with insect life. The predominating colour throughout this country is a dull olive green, relieved only here and there by the complementary colour, red, which is supplied by bunches of berries and warm-coloured leaves.

We are now in the great forest region; and in passing to the far interior we may glance at the condition and surroundings of two populous and influential tribes, the Bakundu and the Bangala. These two

Fighting knives, Kasai
In the collection of the Author

Ribba fighting knife
Native knives in the collection of the Author

tribes may be considered to represent links connecting the pastoral trading tribes of the Lower Congo with the grosser savage tribes who dwell in the heart of the forest region within a hundred-mile radius of Stanley Falls. In point of enterprise, tractability, and perhaps even in general physique, the tribes of the Bakundu and the Bangala stand preeminent among all the Congo population, and they may be said to represent the finest types of the Western branch of the Bantu race. The members of these tribes possess remarkable shrewdness. They are warlike, active and industrious. The element of superstition is less complicated and extravagant in its observances; the material aspect of life apparently offering more attraction to these people than the intricate mysteries of the spiritual phase. Here, the charm-doctor's power is limited; his influence is exercised with people whose disposition is more martial than credulous. The tribal and individual superiority of the Bakundu and the Bangala is obviously due, in a great measure, to the strategic position of their villages, whereby they were enabled for many years to monopolise trade. Residing midway between the trading tribes below them, and the more primitive savage tribes whence slaves and ivory were at the time procurable, they constituted a community of middlemen, or more correctly speaking, pirates, for they preyed upon their feebler neighbours

and disposed of the products of their piratical transactions to the trading tribes.

As a natural consequence it follows in the first place that these two tribes have awakened to the advantage of cohesion, a quality singularly lacking among the Congo people, and their natural ferocity has become organised into a warlike spirit; and secondly, in the process of dealing with the more enlightened trading tribes below them, their natural intelligence has become developed.

As a typical forest tribe, dwelling absolutely in the heart of the forest region and entirely outside the sphere of all foreign influence, the Waluheli, of the Aruimi district, will serve as an example.

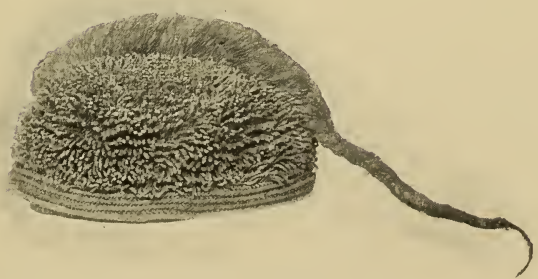
Here the rule is strictly applied that the weak shall fall and the strong predominate. It is in the conditions of life of such a tribe that we meet with the clearest demonstration of the influence of environment. The Waluheli are typical savages, who illustrate the various phases of degeneracy to which mankind can sink when exposed to an unpropitious condition of surroundings.

Cannibalism is a regular practice. Human flesh is an article of diet. The facial and cranial type, particularly of the women, is low. They live in a condition of perpetual warfare.

The tribal union rarely lasts through more than a few generations. The ferocious impulse is here

Ngombe

Aruimi



Aruimi

Three native hats

clearly apparent; and treachery, in the sense for instance of sudden night attacks or cunning artifice, is a powerful element in their character. Trade in this region is limited to bartering transactions in slaves, ivory, and native iron ore.

The men are generally possessed of fine physique, though they are ill-proportioned. They have well-developed chests, thick necks, but somewhat short thin legs. They are exceedingly active and alert.

Beyond their iron fighting knives and spears, wooden stools, and a few clay cooking-pots, they have no possessions. Their huts, roughly built of grass stalks and plaited palm leaves, are but the temporary structures of nomad tribes. Their plantations of manioc are seldom of adequate extent. They appear to possess no definite creed, beyond the belief that the spirits of their deceased kinsmen return to the world in the form of trees. They believe that for women there is no future life. Every man is a natural tyrant. There can scarcely be said to exist a distinctive tribal type; the communities being largely composed of tribal remnants. To this latter circumstance—the constant admixture of blood—may be attributed their remarkable reproductive power.

Within the limits of their own experience, the Wauheli and kindred tribes may be considered intelli-

gent, as the ingenious fashion of their weapons will testify.

Their lives are as wild and unchecked as the tangled growth of their primæval forest homes. There is nothing to occupy or to stimulate the mind, which lives, thinks, and acts for the moment. They possess a faculty of indifference, the obvious outcome of the precariousness of their lives.

When not fighting for bare existence, their minds are focussed upon methods of satisfying their animal wants. Despite the present condition of these forest tribes, there yet remain signs of a former condition of superiority. A world of human nature lies hidden beneath their dark, forbidding exteriors. Upon many occasions I have had revealed to me evidences of humane and tender feelings.

In taking a hasty leave of these children of the forest, we must refer to the influence of their environment as an excuse for their shortcomings. Their eyes are never refreshed by a distant view, and there is no bright sunshine in their country to gladden their hearts, for the sun's rays seldom or never penetrate the eternal forest gloom in which they spend their lives.

With danger lurking behind the trunk of every tree, and with an ever-present fear of capture and death, they live their days and years; they pass through periods of modified joys and sorrows, know-

ing nothing of the outside world, living without hope and without regrets.

Nothing is lasting in their lives—the keenest heart-ache, the bitterest grief, is soon forgotten. They live only for the present, without prospect or retrospect. The wild, dark woods, weird and desolate, form the environment of the Waluheli forest dwellers and the Waluheli savage bears the undeniable impress of their influence.

LANGUAGE

Among the native tribes of the Congo basin there exists no form of history. There is no written language. They have no signs or characters; no tradition, and no memorials of the past. It is as though an opaque curtain hung behind the living generation, concealing everything that passed before their time. It is considered a bad omen to allude to any one who is dead. Such an allusion is only made by accident, and is immediately redeemed by a snapping of the fingers.

Confronted thus with insurmountable difficulties in the way of tribal classification, it becomes necessary to depend upon language as the one chief guide in determining racial boundaries and affinities.

The languages spoken by the native inhabitants of the Congo basin are all of the same grammatical structure; and philologically the Congo tribes are for the most part allied to the great Bantu group; one of the most extensive of the African racial divisions.

The languages, more particularly the Kikongo, are rich and liquid, and contain a preponderance of vow-

els. The beauty and plastic form of these languages is noticeable, suggesting the softness of Italian, the grace of French, and the precision of English.

The Bantu languages spoken by the Congo tribes are distinct from each other; broadly speaking they differ in somewhat the same degree as French is distinct from Italian. Were we permitted to study the mother-tongue of the Bantu languages, we should in all probability find the present languages allied to the mother-tongue in somewhat the same degree as French and Italian are allied to the original Latin.

The most natural peculiarity of the language is the prevailing use of *pre*-fixes, in place of suffixes, and an alliteration which amounts almost to rhyme. It is interesting to remember that this euphonious peculiarity is also found in early English.

Soft, pliant, and musical, the language is governed by an alliterative concord. There are but few consonants, of which in the Lower Congo language the letter "f" is the most frequently met with. In fact, the missionaries in setting up type to print their translations of the Scriptures into Kikongo, had to send home an order for an extra stock of that letter.

Among leading tribesmen an archaic form of language appears to be known in certain districts, but this would apply principally to the tribes living in the open country towards the coast. In the far interior the question of languages becomes intricate.

Even the merest allusion to them would necessitate a deal of technical explanation.[1]

Their language is pictorial, but it is deficient in words to express noble or generous sentiments. In fact no expression exists in any of their languages representing such sentiments as gratitude or thanks. Every name is a proper name. There are no such words as "solids" or "fluids," "plants" or "animals." To *like* and to want or desire, are synonymous terms in their language.

It has been said that oratory constitutes the negro's one fine art. The same statement may be aptly applied to the Bantu tribes of the Congo, leaving aside for the moment the ingenuity and decorative faculty displayed by the latter race in ironwork. The Congo natives of all tribes are naturally eloquent and ready speakers. They are also adepts in the use of metaphor. They reason clearly, and are ready debaters. The sonorous effect of their speech is greatly aided by the soft inflections and the moist euphony of their language.

Among many of the Upper Congo tribes it is a common practice at a public meeting for the speaker

[1] The most complete information hitherto published upon this subject, as well as upon Congo matters in general, is contained in Sir Harry Johnston's valuable work, "George Grenfell and the Congo" (Hutchinson & Co). Mr. George Babington Michell, at present H. M. Consul at Paris, with upwards of nineteen years' experience in Northern and Central Africa, has studied and compiled several native vocabularies, which should prove of the utmost value to the student of African languages.

Bopoto

Photograph taken by the Author

to hold in his left hand a number of small sticks, generally of split cane, each piece of wood representing a pre-considered point of his argument. These points are subsequently enumerated and emphasised by the speaker selecting and placing one of these sticks upon the ground in front of him.

It is customary for a Congo native in making an important speech upon personal matters, to commence by referring to incidents which happened in his earliest recollection, and in this manner to refer to every favourable incident in his career, paying no regard as to their applicability.

When speaking in his defence, upon being charged with committing a breach of the native laws, a Congo native will systematically refer to the good actions of his past life, and the evil actions in the lives of his accusers; in this manner he will seek to prejudice the judicial authorities in his favour.

As a slight illustration of the difficulties of the language, I recollect my endeavours to learn the native words for counting. I commenced with small sticks, but the word which I wrote to represent the first numeral, I subsequently found was the native word for a piece of wood. Pointing to my thumb in my second attempt, I was duly told a certain word. Indicating my first finger I was told another word. I now considered that I had ascertained the words representing *one* and *two*. Once more I failed, for

I had gathered the words for "thumb" and "finger," instead of the desired numerals.

They generally count by fives, counting the fingers on one hand and the fingers on the other; then the toes on one foot and on the other. They signify ten by closing one hand. And then, making a mark on the ground, they recommence with the fingers of the hand.

As an illustration of the redundancy of syllables, in the language spoken by the Waluheli, the first five numerals run as follows: 1, Unjundu; 2, Mamiomabinga; 3, Nambongo; 4, Egbongane; 5, Ibomoti; this last word literally meaning a hand of five fingers. It is scarcely necessary to remark that in this district there was but little commercial activity.

The Congo languages have been described as onomatopœic, a word which may be defined as representing a system of coining words from sound. For example, in the same manner that our children say "Puff-puff" to indicate a train, so the African savages will use the word "Watamba tamba" to describe men who march in large bodies in imitation of the sound of their footsteps. "Watuku tuku" was also coined by them to designate white men, because they associated them with the sound of the engines of their river steamers. The first syllable "Wa" in each case represents the plural prefix denoting people.

The right hand is called the male, and the left

Fetish, Lower Congo, used for registering vows

In the collection of the Author

hand the female. With Zanzibaris the influence of the East is very apparent: when steering a boat they will say: "Pull with the hand you eat with"—indicating a direction to the right, their expressions to denote the right and left hand being Mkono akulia and Mkono washoto.

It is a fact worthy of remark that the first sound a Central African baby utters, like our own babies, is the word "Mamma." This same word "Mamma" I have heard uttered on more than one occasion by wounded Africans as a last dying articulation.

SUPERSTITION

SUPERSTITION is a strongly pronounced element in the lives of the native tribes of the Congo region. In the open country of the cataract region particularly, the native tribes are much involved in fetichism and in propitiating the evil spirit, which is esteemed by them as a mysterious power for evil, man's mortal enemy. The rites and ceremonies, imposed with a view of propitiating the supernatural powers, become somewhat weaker in the observance among tribes inhabiting the forest region of the far interior.

The Congo natives being ignorant of the laws of Nature, laws which remain to them a constant source of mystery, maladies and unpleasant experiences of all kinds are ascribed by them to the influence of evil spirits. Life is passed in a condition of constant dread. All that is unaccountable to the native mind is at once enveloped with the property of magic. All ills and misfortunes are supposed to emanate from the evil spirit.

Their lives are apparently darkened by a dread, the terrors of which are unknown to less superstitious races.

Powder flask
Lower Congo

Pillow
Manyema

Idol
Manyema

In the collection of the Author

The Congo natives may be said to have religious conception without religion. Their active divinities are all evil. Theologically they are worshippers of the Evil Spirit, "Devil-worshippers." They admit the existence of a Good Spirit, "Nzambi," but the powers of this good spirit are supposed to be entirely passive.

In the witchcraft practised by the Congo natives, we have an exemplification of that primitive sorcery which is said to be a remnant of the ancient Nature-worship which existed in the earliest days of mankind.

There exists a universal belief in a future existence; the circumstance of the future life varying according to different tribal beliefs.

Death is regarded in the light of a migration.

The Congo native's creeds are in harmony with his intellect; puzzled by the mysteries of life, he is always ready to accept unhesitatingly the wildest theory to account for natural events.

The majority of tribes possess one or more charm-doctors, by whom their lives and actions are almost wholly swayed. The extravagant observances and preposterous ordinances, which figure so prominently in native life, are functions introduced by the professional charm-doctors, with a view of mystifying their credulous followers, and in order to conceal the limit of their pretended power over evil influences.

The charm-doctor's ascendency and dominion over others is principally derived from the sentiment of respect and uncertainty with which his mystic power is regarded.

The charm-doctor is considered to be the connecting link between ordinary mortals and the mysterious powers and spirits. The influence of the sorcerers is directly opposed to all principles of progress; for example: should a man by natural shrewdness, or by personal energy, accumulate native riches in the form of slaves, guns, or trade cloth, the charm-doctor would publicly accuse him of sorcery, with the probable consequence that he would be killed and his goods divided.

In the event of the death of any person of importance (Lower Congo), a charm-doctor is called to discover the person guilty of having exercised an evil influence; for among most Congo tribes death is never regarded in the light of a natural event. In most cases an old person or a slave is accused and forthwith secured, and at an appointed time is submitted to a poison ordeal. A decoction is prepared from a poisonous bark ("N'Kassa"), which is administered to the victim at sunrise.

If, during the day, the potion acts as an emetic, this fact is accepted as a proof of innocence. If, on the other hand, the poison acts as a purgative, the victim is strangled, and the body is thrown in a river.

Manyema

Manyema
Hardwood of great age

Lower Congo

Lower Congo

Idols in the collection of the Author

In the latter case the action of the test is accepted as a proof of guilt, and the natives, by killing the victim, are satisfied that an evil spirit has been exterminated.

The Babangi and kindred tribes (Upper Congo) believe that evil-disposed persons have the power of changing themselves into reptiles and savage animals in order to take life.

"N'Kimba" or "Fua-Kongo" is the title of a peculiar rite, the practice of which is principally confined to the tribes inhabiting the cataract region of the Lower Congo. When the elders of a village consider that the women are not bearing the usual proportion of children, they proclaim an "N'Kimba." The charm-doctors, and other active agents of the rite, take up quarters in an isolated forest, where they are soon joined by numbers of voluntary initiates. Boys and men of any age are eligible, as also are girls, and women who have not yet borne a child.

Upon entering the "N'Kimba" the body of the initiate is painted with white chalk. A complicated form of language is adopted. The initiate is supposed to die, and to be resurrected, and to have entered upon a new life.

At the conclusion of the "N'Kimba," which usually lasts five or six years, the members of the craft take a new name, and pretend to have forgotten their former life, and do not recognise their parents and friends. Through after life there exists a bond of

union between individuals who have been members of this strange and secret fraternity.

Health is identified with the word "Moyo," spirit (Lower Congo), and in cases of wasting sickness, the "Moyo" is supposed to have wandered away from the sufferer. In these cases a search-party is sometimes led by a charm-doctor, and branches, land shells, or stones are collected. The charm-doctor will then perform a series of passes between the sick man and the collected articles. This ceremony is called "vutulanga moyo" (the returning of the spirit).

A common belief is prevalent (Lower Congo) to the effect that a man's "moyo" (spirit) can be stolen from his body, and consumed by an enemy.

In the event of a sick man dreaming twice of a particular individual a suspicion is aroused, and the individual who has figured in the ailing man's dreams is liable to be accused of consuming his "Moyo" (Lower Congo).

It is an evil omen for a man to point at another with his finger; ill-fortune is said to be transmitted by so doing.

It is customary for all Congo natives to believe in omens. Certain birds and animals are supposed to represent good and evil influences. The owl, for example, is known to the Babangi (Upper Congo) as "the evil spirit's spy."

The idol-maker

From a bronze statue by the Author

Throughout the Congo region the natives have a superstitious objection to talk of a deceased person. In the event of their doing so, it is customary to use the past tense of the verb "to live" ("widi") before his or her name. If this be omitted, the anger of the deceased's relations or friends is immediately aroused. When a person dies and is buried in the ground, all danger of the deceased being exposed to the caprices of this evil spirit are at an end; and even to mention the deceased's name is considered an unkind action.

Wooden images of human shape, are common among the Congo tribes, and more particularly among the inhabitants of the Lower Congo. These are generally carved in more or less fantastic shapes, by the charm-doctors, by whom they are sold, as representing certain peculiar properties, and with power to avert evil and misfortune.

If the images subsequently fail to justify the virtues ascribed to them by the vender, they are either promptly re-sold to another, more credulous, or they are disfigured and cut to pieces in angry disappointment.

It is a common custom of the Lower Congo for natives to record an oath by driving a splinter of hard wood or a piece of iron into the chief's big image. The oath is considered binding as long as the splinter or nail is allowed to remain in the image.

Those wooden images are called "nkissi" (witchcraft charms), and much ingenuity is displayed in their carving. The faces are frequently endowed with expression, and often the physical characteristics of a tribe are effectively portrayed.

IN GENERAL

Customs

When taking into consideration the great diversity of mental condition, and the general modes of living which exist between tribes who form the population of the Congo Region, it is difficult to present more than a few bald facts to illustrate a few of the more important of the native customs.

The natives of the Congo region are divided into clans, tribes, and small communities under the nominal government of chieftains and headmen. The clans are distinguished by difference of types, language, decoration, weapons, and, in the case of the Upper Congo tribes, by the various cicatrised designs upon their faces and bodies.

Hereditary chieftainship seldom exists, although in cases where blood succession is observed, the eldest son of the chief's sister, his sister by the same mother, is accepted as the heir. By this method a continuance of the same blood is assured.

Old people are seldom to be met with; they are either sacrificed at witchcraft ordeals, or are allowed

to starve, when by reason of their age they are unable to provide for themselves.

Cases of suicide occasionally occur, and are attributed to the emotion of anger.

Evidences of symbolism are occasionally to be met with, as in the case of a Bololo chief who sent his own spear to Glave, to signify that he needed his assistance in war.

Time is reckoned by the moon. The Aruimi tribes signify the time of day by measuring off portions of their left thumb, the middle joint signifying noon.

No record is kept of birth or age. The Congo natives have no appreciation of the value of time.

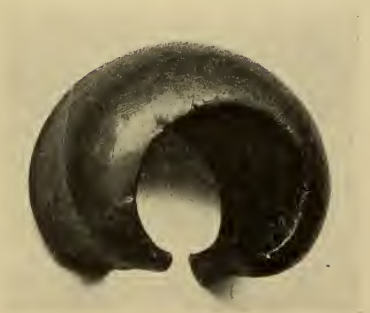
They are inherent gamblers, and will frequently stake their own freedom on the chances of a game.

Several tribes of the Upper Congo, notably the Babangi of Bolobo, have been known to celebrate the occasion of the settlement of a political dispute between rival chieftains by the sacrifice of a slave as an indication of their seriousness. Upon such occasions the victim was tortured by having his arms and legs broken. He was then buried in a hole up to his neck, at the junction of two village paths, and here was left to die a lingering death.

Astonishment is expressed by placing the hand over the open mouth and elevating the eyebrows. Placing the first finger upon the eyelid and uttering

Metal collar, Malinga River

"Molua" metal collar



Aruimi metal anklet iron

In the collection of the Author

the word "Nyo" signifies the negative (Babangi). In speaking upon a momentous question, the negative is usually pronounced at the conclusion of the sentence.

Breaking a stick, and cutting a bunch of leaves into two portions, are common methods of expressing satisfaction and the sealing of a bargain. In the Babwende tribe (Lower Congo) passing the open left hand across the open mouth from left to right, emitting at the same time a puff of air, signifies the settlement of any matter. A precisely similar gesture with certain Upper Congo tribes denotes an expression of truthfulness.

In lieu of openly laughing at a companion's shortcomings, the Congo natives usually utter a derisive howl, and tap their mouths with their open hand.

Whatever may be the inner promptings of their hearts, the Congo natives display but little sympathetic feeling or unselfishness. It is considered a sign of weakness for either man or woman to express emotion.

* * * * *

Ti n'deko, as it is called at Bangala (blood brotherhood), is a ceremony in common practice throughout the greater part of the Congo region, more especially among the tribes of the Upper Congo. It is a form of cementing friendship, and a guarantee of good faith

between chieftains that is oftentimes respected even by the most unscrupulous. The ceremony even partakes of religious significance. An incision is made in the right arms of the two contracting parties, and as the blood flows, powdered potash is sprinkled upon the wounds; the master of ceremonies at the same time delivers a speech, the object of which is to recall the seriousness of mixing blood in brotherhood, and the importance of maintaining the sanctity of the sacred contract. The two arms are then rubbed together, so that the flowing blood intermingles, and both parties are then publicly proclaimed to be brothers of one and the same blood. In some tribes the blood of each party is mixed together and placed in a broad leaf, together with a sprinkling of mysterious powder. The leaf is then rolled cigar-wise and cut into two portions, each portion being consumed between the two individuals who thus enter into the blood bond.

The natives of the Upper Congo always become much excited at the sight of blood, whether it be blood of man or beast.

* * * * *

There is an intricacy about the code of laws recognised in Central Africa which completely baffles all one's attempts at solution. For example, a native may be observed to sell his mother, even his

father, perhaps sisters or brothers, but the particular power which enables him to carry out transactions of this kind remains a mystery.

Condition of Women and Children

Broadly speaking, women represent a current value—they are liable at any time to be sold. The proportion of free women is very small. A wide difference exists between men and women in regard to the occupations of daily life. Women occupy an inferior social position. The various gradations in the scale of savagery may be fitly estimated by the condition and treatment of women.

In comparison with the men, women are of inferior physique, a fact obviously due to their position of servitude, and to the premature decay attendant upon their early development. The features of even quite young women often bear tokens of stress and strain.

Proceeding inland from the coast, in point of general physique, the male type improves; the female type however is higher near the coast. Far inland, the female type is much lower than that of the male. Throughout the entire Congo population, women cultivate the soil, provide and cook food, collect firewood, and attend to all domestic matters.

Girls are held to be marriageable between the ages of nine and ten. Marriage is invariably a mat-

ter of purchase, the transaction being effected either with the girl's father or with the chief of the village. If a married woman dies before giving birth to a child, the husband has the right to demand from the deceased woman's parents or from the chief, the repayment of the amount of the purchase-money.

The extraordinary virility of the Central African races may be ascribed to the following principal reasons: Firstly, to the plurality of women, for generally speaking one finds the number of women is greatly in excess of the male population, the reason for this being that men are so frequently killed in their incessant intertribal battles. It necessarily follows that the strongest and most enterprising of the men is generally the owner of the most wives, and consequently the fittest male becomes the father of the most children.

Home life does not exist. Huts are generally in long lines. Women and very young children dwell together, but the men lead a primitive club life of their own. They have no artificial appliances for comfort. There is practically no reserve or privacy in their lives.

Upon the first signs of pregnancy, women retire to a special part of the village, which is kept apart from the male section of the population and which is called Nzo Ngudi Nkento (the house of the bearing women) (Lower Congo). There they remain until

Native chair or back rest, Wenya
In the collection of the Author

Native mask, Rua
In the collection of the Author

the child is born and weaned. It is interesting to remark the affinity of this custom with an ancient Hebrew law. In connection with the isolation of women during the period of pregnancy and suckling, it should be borne in mind that they are influenced by the question of milk, for they have no artificial means of nourishing a child. During the enforced absence of a woman under these circumstances, the husband takes advantage of the law which permits him a plurality of wives, and his first wife is immediately supplanted by a second.

It is a common practice for women to eat clay or sand at childbirth.

Weaning is produced by smearing the breast with an acrid preparation.

Twins are generally considered to be an omen of good, and the mother takes pride in the event.

Deformed children are usually killed at birth. Albinoes are allowed to live, but they are generally objects of contempt and derision.

Adultery is considered a crime, and is sometimes punishable by death, but in most instances the offence may be condoned by the payment of a fine. If adultery be committed within the village, both the man and woman are considered equally guilty; outside the village boundary, however, the man only is held at fault. This custom again is analogous to an ancient Hebrew law.

Their children are like ours. The pleasures of the African child are the pleasures of all children. Their mothers coo to them and use flowery and endearing terms. Whilst still mere babies, after being bathed and laid out in the sun to dry, they toddle about helping to catch small fish or to snare birds, and they play at cooking food in the burning embers of their mothers' fire. Little boys make miniature bows and arrows; they paddle miniature canoes and ambitiously imitate all the pursuits of grown-up people. They have no guiding voice to correct or to curb their natural animal instincts. They are the offspring of parents whose union was merely transitory.

There would appear to be solid foundation in support of the following theory, which accounts for the apparent arrest of the intellectual faculties at an early age. Certain it is that Central African children are exceedingly intelligent and quick-witted. The subsequent arrest of the intellectual faculties has been attributed to the premature closing and subsequent ossification of the sutures of the skull, thus arresting the normal expansion of the brain.

* * * * *

No record is kept of dates. Consequently natives are ignorant of their age. The only epochs that

remain marked in their minds are associated with such events as the occasion of a tribal fight or the killing of an elephant.

Disease and Sickness

The prevailing maladies to which the Congo natives are exposed, comprise smallpox and sleeping sickness, known as "ntolo" (Babangi) and "Bokono" (Bangala): a very prevalent and fatal disease, the nature of which has now been fully determined. The symptoms of sleeping sickness consist of a pain in the spine, and an ever increasing desire to sleep. The sufferer generally succumbs within six weeks from the time he is first afflicted.

To so great an extent is this malady dreaded, that the direst and most effective curse a Babangi native can pronounce is "waka ntolo" (may you die of sleep). Fever, malarious and bilious, is of frequent occurrence; elephantiasis, ulcers and dysentery, are also prevalent, this last being perhaps the most frequent and fatal disease.

The crudest and most extravagant remedies are applied, apparently upon the principle that one ill drives out another. Herbal medicines are used, occasionally with beneficial results, but the nature of the herbs is kept secret by those who derive profit by applying them. Being ignorant even of the primary laws of sanitation, it is remarkable that more epi-

demics do not ravage the country; indeed, were it not for the scavenging of pariah dogs, birds and insects, the cleansing rains, and high winds, life in a native village would be rendered intolerable.

In the event of a person being considered to be afflicted by a contagious malady, I have known the victim to be brutally beaten to death, and his body bound to a tree far away from the village, generally on some hill-top.

Cicatrisation

The process of cicatrisation is universally practised among tribes of the interior above Bolobo, each tribe or clan adopting a distinct cicatrised tribal mark—"Dikwala." At the age of four or five the process is first commenced, a series of incisions being cut in the skin and flesh of the face, breast, and abdomen, in accordance with the tribal design. Every few months the incisions are re-cut, and are filled with cam-wood powder or wood ashes. After frequent repetitions of this painful mutilation, extending over a period of years, the flesh protrudes, in the form of excrescent warts.

The faces of the Balolo tribe, of the Malinga and Lupuri country, are much disfigured by this process, lumps of flesh as large as pigeon's eggs protruding on each temple, above the base of the nose, and upon the chin. The Bopoto and kindred tribes

are distinguished by a peculiarly elaborate system of cicatrisation.

The origin of this custom as it is at present practised would appear to be threefold: primarily, it is a barbaric love of decoration; secondly, the desire for an indisputable means of tribal identification; and thirdly, a means of promoting union, because all who are similarly marked must manifestly belong to the same clan.

To this practice, which Herodotus describes as one of the characteristic features of the Thracians and Scythians, may be traced the origin of heraldry. Absurd as it may at first appear, the conventional emblems in use at the present day, the devices which are used upon note-paper and carriage-panels, owe their distant origin to the indelible tribal marks which were cut or punctured upon the skin of our early antecedents.

Costume and Ornaments

Although the native men and women of the Congo indulge in little clothing, barely sufficient in many cases to cover their nakedness, and in some tribes, the Bopoto, for example, complete nudity prevails among the women, yet as a race, the Congo natives are by no means insensible to the charms of personal adornment. It would seem that clothing was first adopted as a means of decoration rather than

from motives of decency. There exists, however, throughout the Congo population, a marked appreciation of the sentiment of decency and shame as applied to private actions.

The costume and ornamentation prevalent with the Lower Congo men is principally confined to a grass loin cloth and the mutilation of the two incisor teeth of the upper jaw; the women wear a small apron in front and behind, suspended from a belt of grass cord; ear decorations of wood and metal, and in many instances a stick six inches long is inserted through a hole in the dividing cartilage of the nose.

Among the Upper Congo natives the variety in costume and ornamentation is more extensive. The men wear a strip of grass fibre cloth, or beaten bark (the bark of the fig tree from which the sap has been beaten), suspended in front and behind from a waist belt. Their bodies are frequently marked with lines and designs of pigment; charcoal, clay, ochre and lime, or pipeclay and camwood constituting the basis of colour.

The hair and beard are either shaved or are plaited, into elaborate braids and points, according to the tribal custom in vogue. The hair of the eyebrows and the eyelashes both of men and women, is invariably extracted—(a common practice also with the ancient Greeks and Romans). A native of the Babangi tribe, careless of his personal appearance, and

Head of Pigmy chief

From the bronze by W. Goscombe John, R.A.
In the Collection of the Author

whose eyelashes are not extracted, is dubbed "Mesu n'kongea" (hairy eyes).

The finger-nails are pared and scraped to the quick. Among the cannibal tribes the front incisor teeth are chipped to points by means of an iron chisel.

Iron anklets and bracelets, of varied weight, are extensively worn by both men and women. Necklets and bracelets of human teeth, dried fingers, and collar-bones are frequently worn in communities where cannibalism is practised.

The Babangi tribes wear a massive iron or copper collar called "molua"; also anklets of the same metals. The collars weigh between 15 and 20 lbs., and sometimes exceed even this weight. It is no uncommon sight to see a native woman lying down in order to relieve herself of the heavy weight of her metal collar; and frequently these metal collars cause wounds on the shoulders, wounds which become ulcerous sores. Metal ornaments are considered to enhance the value of a woman.

I once asked a native chief at Bopoto the reason why the women of his district wore no costume. His reply in the native language is difficult to render, but the following was the import of what he said:—

"Concealment makes the inquisitive hungry."

The universal custom of anointing the body with a preparation of palm-oil and powdered camwood, a preparation which colours the skin a deep red,

appears to be of very early origin. By this process the skin is to a certain extent protected against sudden chills. In time of war the men of most Upper Congo tribes blacken their faces and necks with palm-oil and powdered charcoal, in resemblance of a certain species of monkey (soko); they explain that by so doing they derive "monkey cunning."

It is considered much more distinctive to wear a strip of European cotton cloth, no matter how filthy it may be, rather than their own beautifully woven grass cloth.

Among the river-side tribes the men frequently wear round or conical-shaped hats, made of monkey skin or leopard's skin. The same fashion is occasionally observed among the tribes of the Aruimi. The natives who reside upon the banks of the Congo at the mouth of the Lomami (between Stanley Falls and the Aruimi) smear their hair, foreheads, and throats with a tar-like substance composed of palm-oil and charcoal. In the upper lip a circular piece of ivory, averaging an inch in diameter, is inserted.

Burial Customs

The burial rites of the Congo people vary according to tribal customs.

On the Lower Congo it is customary for women to smear white pipe-clay across their foreheads, and to shave their heads; the duration of mourning depending on the social position of the deceased.

Graves are generally covered with broken bottles and broken cooking-pots, as a feature of symbolism.

On the Upper Congo the body of the deceased is wrapped in cloth, and buried in a hole dug beneath his own house, food being placed by friends upon his grave. The house is allowed to fall into ruin.

There is usually great sacrifice of life upon the occasion of the death of a chief, the idea being that the spirits of those who are sacrificed will follow the spirit of the dead chief, so that he may maintain a retinue even after death. Professional women mourners are engaged, who manifest their grief by agonising wails and cries which really give the impression of genuine sorrow. In the midst of their wildest wails, however, they sometimes stop to smoke a pipe or to haggle with their neighbours, and then resume their lamentations. During the period of mourning they refrain from bathing, and maintain an appearance of great dejection, entirely neglecting all care of their persons. In this relation it is interesting to note that the burial customs of the ancient Egyptians consisted in smearing their faces with mud, rolling the dead bodies in quantities of cloth, and placing food upon the grave.

Food

Light food in the form of fruit, is taken at sunrise, snacks are indulged in during the day and the principal meal is eaten after sundown. As a general

rule the natives are moderate eaters, but when they secure an elephant or a hippopotamus, they gorge themselves to an extraordinary extent and remain impotent for days afterwards.

In the Lower Congo the spotted grass rats are considered a great delicacy. They are caught by being driven into traps, cylindrical in shape, made on the principle of the familiar eel creels.

Sir Harry Johnston has dealt fully with an interesting fact in relation to the subject of food.[1] It appears obvious, as he remarks, that the present inhabitants of the Upper Congo cannot have occupied the country until within comparatively recent times. At no very distant date the physical conditions of the Great Forest region were such as to prevent extensive settlement, entire regions being largely submerged. A consideration of the native diet alone indicates that great changes have taken place in this part of the African continent within the last few centuries. The staple food of the present inhabitants of the Congo region, with the exception of fish, is almost all of American origin. The dwarf tribes of the Great Forest region are the only natives who appear able to subsist entirely upon indigenous foods.

In the event of the failure of their crop of exotic food, a Bantu tribe will be reduced to a condition of

[1] "George Grenfell and the Congo," by Sir Harry Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A Lukolela girl with firewood

From a bronze statuette by the Author

absolute starvation. Many instances of this latter fact can be cited.

In the far interior, in districts situated around the Aruimi and Lomami rivers, the staple food consists of plantains, manioc, and fish. Towards the west coast, the natives cultivate in addition to plantains and manioc, maize, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, peanuts, egg fruit, bananas, pumpkins, yams, pineapples, and tobacco, and obtain nuts, oil, and wine from the oil-palm. They use also many wild plants, whose leaves when bruised and stewed, are utilised as vegetables, resembling spinach in flavour.

With regard to the unfortunate Congo fowls, much might be written of their suffering and exposure to the sun and rain. Carried in bondage from one town to another, from one market to another, and living only upon what they can peck within a twelve-inch radius of their tether-stick, they present a deplorable appearance.

Pigs are sold alive, and also in the form of meat. Incidentally it is curious to remark that the value of a pig in some districts represents about twice the value of a woman. Two ordinary women may be purchased for the price of one pig.

Fat pork is sold in small portions, and sometimes, to prevent pilfering and thieving, the choicest fat portions will be fastened to a skewer stuck in the

butcher's woolly hair. The hot sun is apt to cause waste, for the fat melts and trickles over the face and shoulders.

* * * * *

Markets

Throughout the Congo, the natives are very strict in the observation of their market laws. Any infringement renders the culprit liable to death. Upon such occasions the culprit is either buried to his neck in a hole in the market-place and his skull crushed by a heavy stone, or he is beaten to death with sticks and his body is subsequently lashed to a pole which is erected alongside a native path.

* * * * *

As in Ireland, whether natives have business or not, they make it a point to attend the market. The trading instinct is very strongly developed. If they have nothing to buy or sell, they like to look on.

They are very noisy; addicted to chronic squabbles. Every one talks at once. No one listens. They waste hours in absurd disputes, every one explaining, no one listening. It would appear that they think outwardly instead of inwardly.

* * * * *

The week of the Bakongo consists of four days, which are named as follows: N'Kandu, N'Konsu, N'Kenge, N'sona.

On each of these days a food market is held in different districts. For instance, the name of a village being tacked on to its market day, a native will speak of N'Kandu Lutete or N'Kenge Lemba.

* * * * *

Strolling in a market-place, my attention was attracted to a woman who was conspicuously arrayed in finery. She was covered with camwood powder, and wore massive iron collars and anklets. A native informed me that she was for sale. "At how much do you value the collar?" I asked. "Three hundred mitakos," [1] was the reply. "And those anklets?" "They are one hundred mitakos each." "And the woman herself?" "Three hundred mitakos."

Weapons

Upper Congo savages are always armed. An unarmed man is jeered at and called a woman, and is told to "go and rear children."

The Congo tribes may be said to live in an early iron age. In the far interior, iron is plentiful and forms the principal element of trade; as iron is a necessity to the natives for the manufacture of their weapons, it has therefore with them an actual value.

The tribes of the interior may be classified not alone by the distinguishing cicatrisation designs upon

[1] Lengths of brass wire.

their faces and bodies, but also by their local designs and forms of fashioning the iron knives and spear heads, which constitute their weapons for purposes of attack and defence. In the manufacture of these weapons, the Upper Congo tribes display a remarkable artistic taste and mechanical ingenuity. Most of the fighting knives manufactured by the tribes far distant from the coast, possess an infinite grace of form, and display a high sense of decorative art.

The iron ore, from its raw state, is reduced and smelted in ant-hills by means of charcoal fires and primitive bellows. It is then beaten into shape by the aid of a smooth stone, and is subsequently fashioned and decorated. Every member of the Upper Congo tribes is more or less able to manufacture his own weapons.

The forms of knives and spears have a decided nationality stamped upon them, and one is easily able to distinguish by certain characteristics of the weapon, the tribe by whom it was made.

Smoking

Of peculiar interest is the fact that throughout Central Africa the tobacco-plant is found growing in a wild state. Both men and women in all the tribes from the coast, as far as Bukute (the equator district), smoke tobacco. From thence, pro-

ceeding inland, the practice of smoking becomes less prevalent.

Pipes of various forms, composed of clay bowls, cane, eland horns, gourds, banana stalks, iron, and even elephant tusks, are employed. Each tribe boasts of a pipe of distinctive shape and composition. The smoke is inhaled, and, after two or three draughts, the pipe is generally passed on to a neighbour.

The tobacco-leaf is merely plucked and dried. In the district on the north bank of the Congo, opposite Lukolela, however, the tobacco-leaf is saturated with urine, rolled and bound somewhat after the fashion of the peruke of old days.

A peculiar form of smoking is sometimes indulged in by digging a hole in soft ground and laying a long grass-stalk in such a way that the two ends project above the surface, and by filling in the hole with earth and lightly withdrawing the stalk, leaving in the soil a hollow canal of semi-circular direction, at one extremity of which a few dry leaves of tobacco were placed together with a burning ember; the natives following this method take their turn, stooping down one after the other, drawing, and inhaling the smoke. This latter form of smoking was frequently practised by carriers while on the march, as by this means they avoided the necessity of increasing their load, even by the weight of a pipe.

Wild hemp smoking (liamba) is practised by some of the natives of the Lower Congo with sad results. The practice however is not extensive, and it would appear to be a habit of comparatively recent origin. The natives indulge largely in snuff, which is prepared by drying tobacco-leaves over a fire, grinding them in the hands, and mixing the powder with the white ashes of a hard-wood fire. Snuff is generally applied to the nostrils upon the blade of a knife. At Lukolela both men and women and even children are inveterate smokers. A very long-stemmed metal pipe is frequently used, the stem sometimes being eight or nine feet long.

The obtaining of fire by rubbing sticks together is an obviously difficult process, and consequently, when a party of natives travel on a journey one of them is always delegated to carry a fire-brand. This is carefully nursed, and held with the smouldering end towards the body.

Songs [1]

The natives of the Congo region, in common with the negro race, possess a natural sense of melody. They frequently indulge in chants, the nature of which is suggestive of very primitive origin. In all cases, these chants are monotonous in tone and without great variety. A man will sing a solo,

[1] My thanks are due to my friend Mr. Raymond Woog for transposing the two African canoe songs which appear on pp. 300, 301.

M'bichi
Musical Instrument, Lower Congo
In the collection of the Author

and the strain will be taken up by the women. It is not improbable that the native canoe-songs, and even funeral dirges, take their origin from a species of bird, the male of which performs a solo, the refrain being echoed by the female. Drums are usually the only musical accompaniment. The subject-matter of the native songs is generally of an impromptu character, and tends to ridicule the foibles and peculiarities of the kinsfolk of the singers.

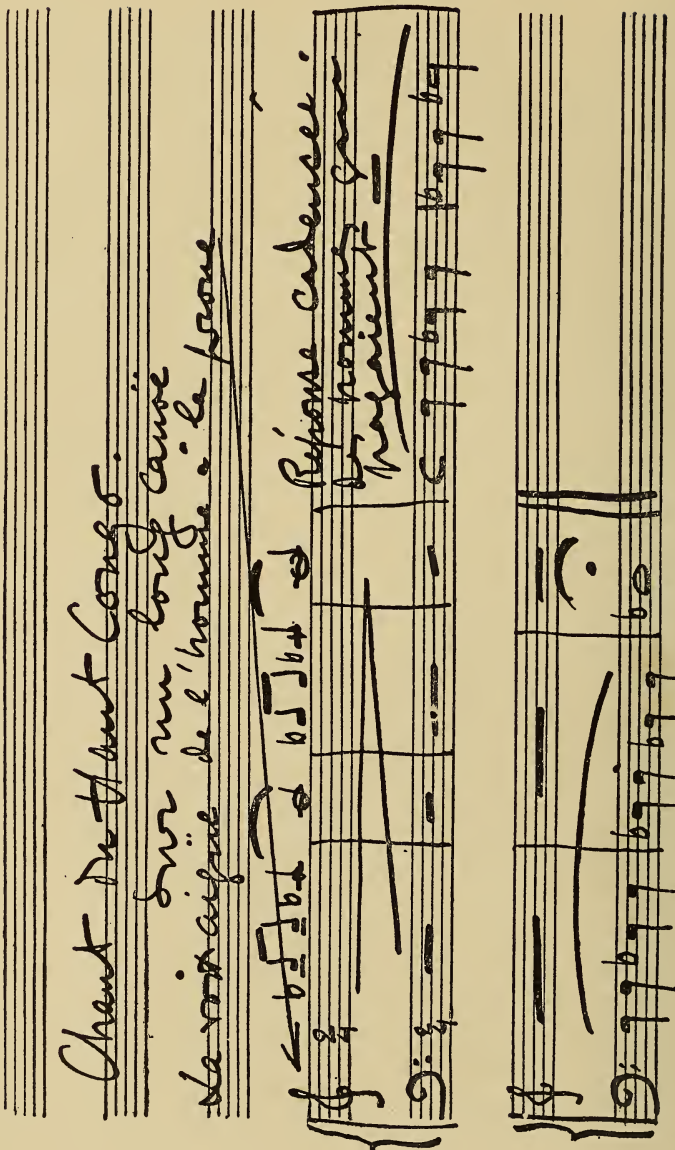
The voices of the men are melodious and musical; the female voices on the contrary are generally shrill and harsh.

Musical Instruments

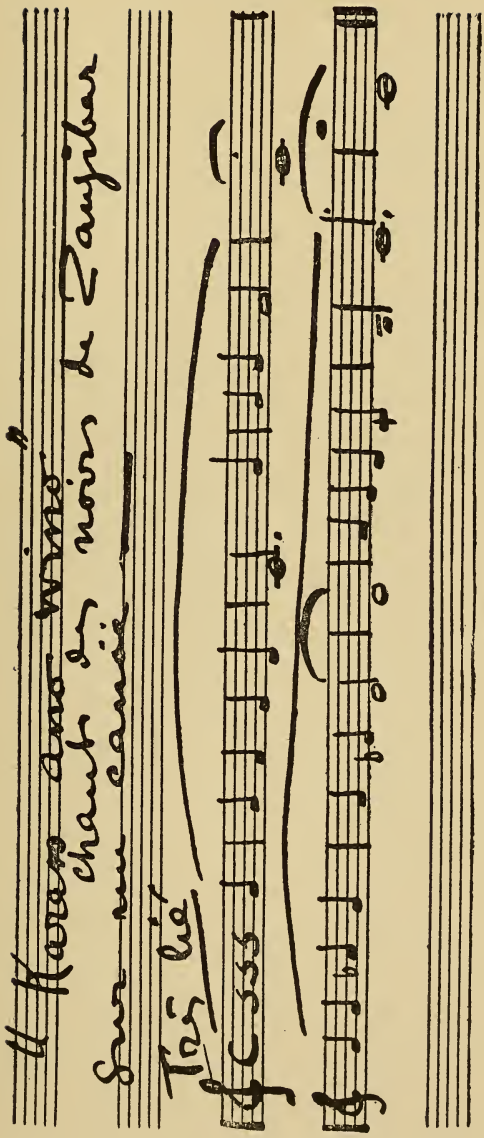
Considering the love of musical sound, which is a distinct characteristic of the African natives, the limited variety of their musical instruments is remarkable.

Drums are composed of goat skin stretched across the ends of a hollowed section of a soft wood tree; and also of sections of hard wood trees, hollowed through a narrow longitudinal crevice, the edges of which are beaten with small drum sticks with balls of rubber attached. It is by means of drums of this latter form that the wonderful system of "drum talk" is conducted.

Rattles and castanets are in common use at witch ceremonies and dances. The Bateke tribe of the


Chant du Haut Congo.
sur un long canoë
la voix aigüe de l'homme à la proue
Réponse cadencée.
des hommes qui
nagaient

NATIVE SONG



NATIVE SONG

Middle Congo use a crude stringed instrument, resembling a lyre in shape. The Lower Congo tribes use the "mbichi," a small instrument composed of tongues of iron, attached to a sounding board, which is held in both hands and played with the thumbs.

Drum-Talk

Throughout Central Africa one finds a remarkable system of communication between villages by means of drum-tapping.

It is evidently of very ancient origin, and has been referred to as a forerunner of writing. Travelling through Africa one's arrival is always anticipated by this means.

The drum that is most commonly used for this purpose consists of the segment of a hard red-wood tree, some six feet long and about two feet in diameter, the inside of which has been hollowed out by means of a small adze-shaped tool. This is a work which occupies much time and calls forth considerable patience. One side being left thicker than the other gives the means of producing two distinct tones.

The natives first "call" the town by a series of taps. They can argue, and they are able even in war-time to communicate with their enemies and make terms. This applies more particularly to the river-side tribes, who, finding that sound travels

better over water, are in the habit of taking their drums to the water's edge. Their signals are repeated from one village to another.

The drum is beaten by two wooden sticks capped by balls of rubber, and the system consists of irregular taps upon the two notes. In spite of all my efforts I was never able to acquire any practical information concerning their methods. But I can personally vouch for the wonderful accuracy with which they conveyed tidings and doings.

By way of testing their powers I once asked for the despatch of a canoe manned by four men, to be sent from a distant village shore. They duly shoved off and, after a few minutes, I asked them to telegraph that the canoe was too small, that they were to return, and that what I required was a larger canoe with an increased number of men. Instantly the canoe returned to the shore and a larger one set out more fully manned, my order being promptly and perfectly executed.

The natives frequently send word to each other by means of drum-tapping, as to the whereabouts of elephants, hippopotami, or buffalo and calling all hands to go and hunt them. They give the description of the place, so that all can meet together at a given spot and join the hunt.

The natives become greatly excited by the booming of a drum; and it is a curious fact related by

natives that monkeys in the forest have been noticed to be affected by the rhythmical beating of a drum.

Proverbs and Fables

Proverbs give a deep insight into domestic life. There are but few examples in use among the Congo tribes. I have failed to obtain any examples from the people of the Upper River; and the following represent the extent of my success among the Lower Congo tribes:

"All things are pleasant to the young."

"If you have to sleep three on a bed, sleep in the middle." The beds are composed of bamboo, with three cross battens. Generally four feet long, three feet wide, and raised six inches from the ground.

"My mother-in-law is angry with me. But what do I care? We do not eat from the same dish." An allusion to the native custom of man and woman eating separately.

"Disu kunsi lukaya" (An eye under a leaf). An allusion to hypocrisy.

"Kiesi vana n'dabu" (Laughter on the eye-lid). An allusion to insincerity.

To denote the last, they say "The mother of the last."

With reference to dreams, they sometimes relate what they saw in "Sleepland."

The various tribes of the Lower Congo are familiar with a version of our nursery fable: "The goose with the golden eggs." "Four fools owned a fowl. The fowl laid blue glass beads instead of eggs. A quarrel arose concerning the ownership of the fowl. The fowl was subsequently killed, and divided into four equal portions. The spring of their good fortune dried up." It should be explained that blue glass beads, introduced in the first place probably by the Phœnicians, have been the chief medium of currency with the tribes near the coast since the earliest times.

The natives of the Babangi and adjacent tribes (Upper Congo) once related to me a fable regarding the origin of monkeys. Many generations ago a tribe of natives who lived upon the banks of the Congo River, near Bolobo, fell into a condition of debt and difficulties with their neighbours. In order to escape the persecutions of their wrathful creditors, they retired into the great forest. Time passed, but they still remained poor. Forest life degenerated them. Hair grew upon their bodies. They arranged to forego speech, lest they should be recognised. They are now still in the forest, and they are known as "Bakewa" (monkey men). This fable applies principally to chimpanzees.

Upon being asked if they ate chimpanzees, a member of the Babangi tribe replied: "No! We

are not like those people over there," pointing in the direction of the interior—"We are not cannibals!"

* * * * *

The natives of the Lower Congo in the earliest days of Congo exploration (1878, 1879) related a fable concerning the inhabitants of the far interior: "Far away inland, many moons' journey, there dwell a tribe of small people. Their heads are so big and heavy that when they fall down, they cannot get up again without assistance." Allowing for African exaggeration it is interesting to note this knowledge of the dwarf race among the Lower Congo tribes, on account of the enormous distance which separates them and the entire absence of communication between the intervening tribes; and also on account of the extreme isolation of the dwarfs who inhabit the heart of the Great Forest.

Nomenclature

The natives of the Upper Congo seldom bear more than one name, a proper name, which has no connection with parentage or tribe. The natives of the Lower Congo are frequently the possessors of six names: the clan name, the surname, the Christian name, the native baptismal name, the Fua-Kongo name, and the Kitoko or fancy name, bestowed upon young men by the young girls of their village.

CANNIBALISM

The motive for eating human flesh is mainly attributable to two sources: firstly, by eating prisoners of war, certain tribes consider they gain courage; and secondly, because human flesh is relished as an article of diet.

A native once said:

"Human flesh gives to us a strong heart for fighting. We eat men because it is good to eat meat that talked. It is our custom."

It is a common belief with savages that people acquire the qualities of the animals upon which they feed.

It is by no means the lack or the need of animal food that leads natives to eat human flesh. They eat it because they have a profound, innate love of it.

The practice of cannibalism, whether it originated or not from stress of adverse circumstances, has become an acquired taste, the indulgence of which has created a peculiar form of disorder. Although such elements as lack of feeling, love of fighting, cruelty and general human degeneracy may be prominent

attributes of the cannibals, it is surprising that a race so addicted to cannibalism living in a condition of anarchy and barbarism, should retain so striking an identity, and should possess so much taste for form and decoration, that they should be so readily amenable to reasoning, and so quick to avail themselves of improved conditions.

The impression I received from personal intercourse was that the cannibals of the forest were infinitely more sympathetic than the people of the open country, where the trading instinct is inborn. The cannibals are not schemers, and they are not mean. When they steal they generally grab. Though in direct opposition to all natural conjectures, they are among the best types of men, representing the most enlightened and enterprising of the Congo communities.

The practice of cannibalism in certain parts of the country is confined to the eating of prisoners of war; in other places the bodies of the dead are consumed, exception, however, being always made of the consumption of the bodies of those who die from any malignant form of skin disease.

When a chief or head-man dies, the members of certain tribes club together and purchase several slaves; after reducing themselves to a state of drunkenness they kill and eat them. It was noticeable among the Bangalas and kindred tribes that a state

Human teeth necklace and bracelet, Aruimi

In the Author's collection

of drunkenness usually prevailed when eating human flesh.

Fights are always followed by feasts.

"Do you people eat human bodies?" said I one day, upon entering a native village, and pointed to a quantity of meat, spitted upon long skewers, being smoke-dried over numerous smouldering fires.

"Io; yo te?" ("Yes; don't you?") was the instant reply.

A few minutes later the chieftain of the village came forward with an offering which consisted of large and generous portions of flesh, only too obviously of human origin. He seemed genuinely disappointed when I refused.

Once in the great forest, when camping for the night with a party of Arab raiders and their native followers, we were compelled to change the position of our tent owing to the offensive smell of human flesh, which was being cooked on all sides of us. A native chief stated to me that the time occupied in devouring a human body varied according to whether the latter happened to be one of his enemies, when he would eat the body himself, or merely a slave, who would be divided between his followers.

There existed in many places an organised system of trade for the barter of human beings destined to be sacrificed for food. In some districts, where the land had been afflicted by famine, it was no un-

common thing for starving natives to be captured wholesale.

I have personally witnessed convoys of slaves that had been bought or captured being conveyed to tribes who purchase them as food, giving ivory in exchange.

The organised traffic in human beings which existed in the district through which the Lulungu River passes may also be mentioned. This river, which constitutes a considerable southern affluent of the Congo, empties into the latter river at a point some eight hundred miles from the Atlantic coast.

Within a short distance of the confluence were to be found a series of strongly fortified villages, representing the head-quarters of the Ngombe, wherein numbers of slaves are imprisoned pending the periodical visits of traders from the Mubangi country, which is situated on the opposite side of the Congo.

A visit to one of these slave-depots at the mouth of the Lulungu River revealed a condition of savagery and suffering beyond all ordinary powers of description.

At the period to which these remarks bear reference it was no uncommon experience to witness upwards of a hundred captives, of both sexes and of all ages, including infants in their mothers' arms, lying in groups; masses of utterly forlorn humanity, with eyes downcast in a stony stare, with bodies attenuated by starvation, and with skin of

that dull grey hue which among coloured races is always indicative of physical disorder. In certain native market-places, notably in the vicinity of the Mubangi, it used to be an ordinary occurrence for captives to be exposed for sale, in most cases with the sinister fate in view of being killed and eaten.

At intervals these villages were visited by the Mubangi, who came in large dug-out canoes, and the process of barter commenced, elephant tusks being the medium of currency used in the purchase of the slaves. Upon the conclusion of this unnatural transaction the visitors retired, taking with them as many of the individuals as had been transferred to their possession by the tedious process of bargaining.

Upon reaching their destination the captives were, in most cases, subjected to further ordeals, being exchanged into other hands until eventually, after having been deliberately fattened, they met their tragic fate, and their bodies were consumed. In cases where a suspicion was entertained of an individual captive's intention to escape, the unfortunate creature was doomed to lie hobbled with one foot forced through a hole cut in the section of a log, with a spear-head driven into the wood close beside the limb, rendering it impossible to move except at the risk of laceration.

Other means to insure the prisoner's safe custody consisted in binding both hands above the head to

the king-post of a hut, or in binding the arms and plaiting the hair into a braid, which was made fast to a branch overhead.

Proportionately, a greater number of men than women fall victims to cannibalism, the reason being that women who are still young are esteemed as being of greater value by reason of their utility in growing and cooking food. This rule does not however hold good throughout, for in the vicinity of the Aruimi River our observations revealed a reversed proportion.

Probably the most inhuman practice of all is to be met with among the tribes who deliberately hawk the victim piecemeal whilst still alive. Incredible as it may appear, the statement remains justified by abundant proof, as well as from personal observation, that captives were led from place to place in order that individuals might have the opportunity of indicating, by external marks on the body, the portion they desired to acquire. The distinguishing marks are generally made by means of coloured clay or strips of grass tied in a peculiar fashion.

The astounding stoicism of the victims, who thus witnessed the bargaining for their limbs piecemeal, was only equalled by the callousness with which they walked forward to meet their fate. In explanation of the extraordinary indifference thus displayed, it can only be assumed that death is robbed

Bangala
Drawn by the Author

A type of the Lomami
Drawn by the Author

of all terror, for living under conditions of perpetual fear, life must present but little that is attractive.

There is a prevalent belief among many of the river-side tribes of the Upper Congo that the flavour of human flesh is improved by submerging the prospective victim up to the neck in the water for two or three days previous to sacrifice. In 1886 when, proceeding to take command of the Station of Bangala, I travelled up the Upper Congo on board the stern-wheel steamer "*Le Stanley*," my companions consisted of Captain Deane, and Dr. Oscar Lentz, a well-known German *savant*.

Arriving late in the evening at the village of Lulungu, situated on the south bank, we applied to the people for provisions, for we had on board some four hundred native followers, a portion of whom were Houssa soldiers, these latter being attached to Captain Deane, who was on his ill-fated journey to take command of Stanley Falls Station.

The Chief of Lulungu informed us that his people were in great trouble. They were at war with a neighbouring village, and daily they had sustained heavy losses; in fact many of their people had been already captured and eaten, and they feared that they would very shortly be overpowered by the superior number of their adversaries.

We held a palaver, and it was agreed that we should enter into the matter at sunrise.

The following morning endeavours were made to parley with the chief of the hostile village. Spears were hurled at us, and our overtures were treated with derisive yells.

Dividing the two villages a stockade had been formed about twelve feet high, composed of the sides of old canoes, which had been split lengthways. The Houssas fired a volley through the stockade, and Deane gave the word to rush forward.

Clambering the stockade, we fell on the opposite side in a confused mass, during which time the natives continued hurling spears at us, and firing occasional shots from their one or two flint-lock guns.

For several minutes the scene was one of indescribable confusion, and the noise of shouting, shrieking savages had a peculiar, awesome effect upon the nerves.

After making two or three plucky stands, the warriors incontinently bolted, to seek cover in the high grass of the neighbouring swamp. In retiring they set fire to their village, and, as a strong wind was blowing, the grass huts crackled and blazed until we found ourselves enveloped in sheets of flame. Stifled by the smoke, singed by the fire, and half-blinded, we suffered considerable discomfort. A few minutes sufficed to convert the village into a mass of charred, smouldering sticks and poles.

The Lulungu people immediately rushed towards the river, calling us to follow. There, attached to stakes, immersed to their chins in water, we found four Lulungu captives in a pitiable plight. Following the habit of the country, their captors had subjected these poor captives to a process of soaking preparatory to their being killed and eaten.

* * * * *

After taking command of the Station of Bangala in 1886, I soon became acquainted with the fact that cannibalism was of frequent occurrence.

I had, as a personal servant, a young Bangala native named Ezambinia. He was bright and intelligent, and aided me greatly in my efforts to learn the Bangala language, and I obtained much valuable information from him.

Most of my notes were made during the evening, for I found that Ezambinia was more at his ease when there was no risk of his being overheard.

One evening, at the termination of a sort of cross-examination to which I subjected him, I perceived a certain hesitancy in his manner. I knew but little of the language at that time, and Ezambinia did his best to talk only in the words that he had taught me. He said that as I had asked questions with reference to the custom of eating human flesh, I might that evening witness the process in the quarter of the village where the chieftain Joko lived.

Ezambinia suggested to me that I should wait until the night was half gone and that I should proceed alone.

Picking my way in the shadow of the huts (for many fires were blazing in the village), I gradually approached the further end of the long line of native huts.

It would probably have been a serious matter had I been detected, because although ostensibly on good terms with the people, yet our peaceful condition was liable at any time to be upset. At length I reached a point at right angles to the river, where a group of bushes afforded me shelter.

A little distance away I saw a group of perhaps forty or fifty men gathered in a circle around a large fire. Occasionally I detected the glitter of a spear-head and heard the metal jingle of bracelets and anklets amid the uproar of human voices.

They all appeared to be talking at the same time. As the fire sometimes burst up into flame, it cast flickering lights upon their bodies and cicatrised faces.

This was the first time I was the actual witness of human flesh-eating. The process was being carried on before me in all its grim and awful reality.

Two years subsequently I witnessed numerous instances of cannibalism, and upon more than one occasion portions of human flesh were actually offered to me with the utmost cordiality by hospita-

Python

bly intentioned forest dwellers. It should be borne in mind that the chief had never before even heard of the existence of a white man, and that he was offering me of his best.

* * * * *

Between four and five years after my return from Africa, I learnt of the presence of a party of Bangala, who had been brought over as objects of curiosity to the Brussels Exhibition. It was late in the afternoon when I found myself passing under a large gateway of the "*Boulangerie*" of the barracks.

Despite the obscurity and the changed nature of my apparel I was immediately recognised, and I heard my native name, "Nkumbi," uttered simultaneously by several of the people.

They were seated around a fire eating their evening meal. They appeared pleased to see me, and I felt pleased at my cordial reception.

The Bangala language, in which I had gained a certain proficiency, had, until that moment, passed entirely from my mind. I found myself replying spontaneously to questions that were asked, but each time I became conscious of the sound of my voice, uttering these strange words, my flow of language ceased—the spell was broken, and speech became paralysed as it were—I could not continue. After listening awhile to their voices, words gradually came back to me and one of my first inquiries was

of the welfare of Ezambinia, my former servant. An ominous silence followed my inquiry. They shook their right hands as a token that he was dead.

Subsequently I took one man apart, out of hearing of his companions, and asked him confidentially in a low tone, to tell me what had really happened. I shall always remember his gesture as he said:

"He is dead. . . . I had his head in my hands."

ENVOI

In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to convey the spirit of something that is deep within me—a fellow-feeling for the Central-African natives. They are not the altogether degraded race that one might infer by reading instances of their brutality and cannibalism. They are a people whose development has been temporarily arrested by adversity. They are very human: they are often cruel but they are often kind.

They have never had a chance. Persecution has always been their heritage. First, they persecuted one another, and then they were persecuted by others.

The Congo natives possess a clear intelligence within the limits of their own experience. Under the influence of good example, they will surely relinquish their evil customs; for their natures are capable of better things. It is as sure that they will improve under good guidance as it is unfortunately sure that Europeans of an inferior moral and intellectual standard, prompted by greed, who have been thrown among them, have in too many cases assimi-

lated a double measure of the natives' lower qualities. For it is a law of nature that the weak shall follow the strong.

There must be hope for a people who are amenable to kind and judicious treatment: we should reflect upon the fact that the African savage of to-day serves to indicate to us how much we ourselves have advanced from a similarly primitive state.

For many years past the attention of the whole world has been occupied by the lamentable condition of misrule on the Congo.[1] Ten years ago Mr. E. D. Morel, an English journalist, commenced a serious study of this question, and he published to the world, through the medium of his heartfelt writings, a comprehensive and faithful record of existing conditions, compiled from the evidence of eye-witnesses. No reference to Congo matters can be made without due acknowledgment of the disinterested and courageous work accomplished by Mr. E. D. Morel.

There are two sides to the subject of Congo affairs: the political side, which has been dealt with so ably by honest, fearless men, who have sought to ameliorate the conditions of a persecuted race. The second side, it appears to me, should relate to the

[1] In the House of Lords, on February 24, 1908, Lord Cromer stated: "There has been a cynical disregard of the native races, and a merciless exploitation of the country, in the interests of foreigners, for which I believe a parallel cannot be found in the history of modern times."

race in question—their nature, their habits and customs, and their personality. If a perusal of the foregoing pages serves to call forth a feeling of interest and sympathy for my African friends, I shall be more than content.

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